

The Purpose & Meaning of The Five Solas

The Solas are simply five Latin phrases that came out of the Reformation that help all Christian churches remember the foundational truths that they must stand on in order to give all honor and glory to God alone. That is what “sola” means—“alone”. All five of these solas fit and work together—they function to bring God all the glory and honor and praise for the work that He alone has done—Soli Deo Gloria!

In summary, the Solas help us to stay God-centered in our worship and practice and not man centered.

Psalms 115:1-3

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth. 2 Why should the nations say, “Where, now, is their God?” 3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

INTRODUCTION

The Reformation was a time of rediscovery. Biblical truth that saves sinners and sanctifies believers had been lost in the church. The church was unhealthy and needed to be reformed. God raised up men to bring the church back to His Word and that time is known as the Reformation. Biblical truth about Christ and salvation was once again taught and learned in the Church. The truths explained here are essential to the Church and to the soul. If we lose them again, a dark day will overtake us. We must know these truths, believe them, and teach them, both in our homes and in our pulpits.

The Reformation began with the conversion of a Catholic Monk named Martin Luther who came to realize that faith alone by the grace of Christ alone is our only hope for salvation. And so we celebrate the Reformation and mark its beginning on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 theses to the chapel door in Wittenberg, Germany. These 95 theses or statements were biblical arguments against the false doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and a clear call for Reformation.

The truths within these statements from Luther were historical truths of the early Church that Christ died to bring us. These are summed up in five statements all starting with the word, Sola, which is Latin for “only” or “alone”.

As the Church today we must continue to uphold and teach these truths so that the future generations will know them and carry them onward to make a strong and glorious Church. We pray for these truths to endure because we desire more than anything to shout the greatest praise to God that He has given His church, Soli Deo Gloria... “to God alone be the glory!”

THE FIVE SOLAS

SOLA SCRIPTURA

The doctrine of “Scripture Alone” is the teaching that the Bible is the only authority in the Church. This statement was a contradiction to the Roman Catholic teaching that church history plus the Bible was the authority in the Church. They believed that the Roman Catholic Church alone could interpret the Scriptures, which they did with their man-made traditions. For the Roman Catholic, that tradition was

authoritative. For the born again believer the Scriptures alone are authoritative. Scripture judges every- thing else, including the findings of Church Councils, the interpretation of biblical scholars, and the conclusions of church tradition. Only God's Word reveals God's will, truth and Gospel. Today, we believe this doctrine and continue to apply it in judgment over churches, pastors, Christian literature, and especially, over our own lives. Psalm 19:7-9; Matthew 4:4; 5:17-18; Luke 21:33; John 12:47-50; 17:17; 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

SOLA FIDE

The doctrine of "Faith Alone" is based on Scripture as a whole but for Martin Luther Romans 1:16-17 was enough to show forth its truth. Luther came to the right conclusion that sinners are made righteous before God (justified) by faith alone in Christ. It is not faith plus works that gives salvation, but faith by itself. Even then, the works we do accom- plish as believers are from the Holy Spirit within us. For without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). Sola Fide was the central rallying cry of the Refor- mation; it broke the bondage of the Roman Catholic belief that faith plus works, confession, communion, and giving tithes was necessary for salvation. Today, we still need to teach this doctrine due to man's belief that he can make himself acceptable to God by his own works. We must hold that justification, or the imputing of Christ's righteous- ness, comes to the sinner freely when the sinner puts their faith in Christ. We believe that if you have faith alone in Christ for your salvation, and trusted Him as Lord then you are freed from the bondage of sin and will not suffer the just wrath of a holy God. Romans 3:19-28; Galatians 2:16; 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:8

SOLA GRATIA

The doctrine of "Grace Alone" teaches us that everything a Christian receives from Christ, including their salvation, is by grace alone. Salvation is God's absolute and unmerited favor upon a sinner. By this, the Reformers expressed the doctrine taught in the Scriptures, that all true believers in Christ receive their faith by grace alone, receive repentance by grace alone and finally persevere in sanctification by grace alone. The Roman Catholic Church taught and still teaches that it dispenses salvation to those who faithfully follow church commandments. Whereas, this phrase teaches that all that is good within us was put there by God and functions by His will. The point here is that God is free in saving whom He will. He is not obligated to us and we have no control over Him. Nothing we have done in the past or can do in the future could ever earn His grace. If we could, it would no longer be grace. We believe that we are all sinners and deserve the wrath of God, however through the grace of God, we have received His love, salvation and eternal life. Ezekiel 36:25-27; Deuteronomy 7:7-9; Romans 3:24; 5:17-21; 11:6; Galatians 2:21; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8-9

SOLUS CHRISTUS

The doctrine of "Christ Alone" is the height and true foundation of all biblical doctrine. We believe that we are saved by Christ and by no one or any- thing else. He alone is the Son of the living God (Yahweh), the Son of Man, the Mediator between God and man, and the Redeemer. He alone lived the perfect life of obedience to God's law on our behalf. Christ alone died on the cross, crying, "It is finished," bearing all the guilt of our sins and suffering beneath the full wrath of God. Christ alone was buried, and rose from the dead in total victory. Christ alone ascended to the heavens and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, ruling all things for the benefit of His Church. The Roman Catholic Church has placed the Pope as Christ's authority on earth and would have the Church look to him. They have also called Mary, the mother of Christ, the eternal virgin, and to be worshiped and prayed to as the mother of God. They have placed popes, priests, Mary, and even other men and women as idols to share

authority with Christ. But the Reformers fought against this heresy and cried out for men to look to Christ alone to save them from the wrath of God. We believe that Christ alone can forgive sins and give Grace to them lost. Christ also sends His Holy Spirit to whom He wills; no church and no man controls the Spirit, except Christ. Exodus 20:3-4; Isaiah 53; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 3:11-17; 17:5; John 1:1-5; 1:14; John 1:29-33; 14:6; Acts 4:10-12; Romans 3:23-26; Romans 5:6-11; Hebrews 1:1-8; Revelation 5

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Each and every other biblical doctrine has its purpose in "The Glory of God Alone." All that God does and all that God creates is for His glory alone! God did not save mankind because He was lonely or because He needed us. God does not save sinners primarily because it benefits them or meets their needs. God does it all first to bring great glory to His name alone. The climax of God's glory is found in the sending of His only Son, Jesus Christ so He might reveal Himself to the world and save them by His all-sufficient grace. When God saves sinners, we get all the benefits of His grace and mercy but He alone gets all the praise and all the glory! The Roman Catholic Church was building an earthly Kingdom full of their glory, which they claimed was God's. The Reformers stood against this man-made, man-centered kingdom and preached the true Kingdom of God. They taught that God is glorified only by what He says in His word. We believe that we must conform all our thinking to this one main goal. We exist and live for God's glory through our faith in Christ alone as He teaches us in His Word! Isaiah 6:3; 48:9-11; Ezekiel 36:22-27; Matthew 6:13; John 12:27-28; John 17:1-5; Romans 5:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 1:6-12; Revelation 19:1