

The Glorious Truth of the Reformation Solas

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I. Sola Scriptura

The Reformation held forth the Word of God as the only authority and the supreme authority. The Word of God *alone* is sufficient to lead a sinner to salvation and the Word of God alone made effective by the Holy Spirit is sufficient to sanctify the believer. One must understand that the Scriptures alone is the highest authority, not a church leader, not a pope, not a church council, not a leadership team, not another book or human idea. There are those that exercise authority which is given by God's grace to lead and govern His Church. Such derived authorities include elders, the authority of the state, the authority of parents over their children, etc. But truly the Word of God alone is the highest authority. And anything or anyone — including any teaching or dogma — departing from the Scriptures must be rejected.

II. Solus Christus

The Reformation brought the gospel back to the only sufficient and efficient work, namely, the perfect life, the substitutionary death, and the victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many have held to and believed in the work of Christ through the ages. But many, however, have added to the work of Christ. This results in the fact that one could no longer state that Jesus Christ and His work *alone* is the grounds for a sinner's salvation. If anything is added to Christ and His work on the cross, then it must be a false gospel. The Reformation chant was that the sacrificial, substitutionary, wrath-bearing work of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross is the only grounds by which a sinner can be reconciled with God.

III. Sola Gratia

The Reformation came back to the Word of God alone and clung to the truth contained therein that what every single sinner deserves is nothing other than the eternal, just, righteous, and immediate wrath of God. Because this is so, anything and everything a sinner receives *other than what he deserves* is simply and solely a result of God's grace. God's grace is His undeserved favor and kindness toward sinners. It is unconditional, it is unilateral, it is unmerited, and uninfluenced. God's grace is simply an act of His benevolence where He gives to sinners that which they do not deserve. For a sinner to be saved, God must intervene and if He sovereignly chooses to do so, it is *solely* because of His grace. The work of salvation is all of grace. For by grace you have been saved. There is no boasting in the life of a believer. It is all by the undeserved favor of God whereby He grants repentance and gives saving faith to the sinner so that he can be reconciled to a holy and just God. It is grace alone that saves.

IV. Sola Fide

The Reformers sang the song loudly and frequently that sinners are justified by faith alone. There is no work on the sinner's part involved. There is no human merit that he can contribute to his own deliverance. A sinner must understand this in order to be saved. Church practices, outward religiosity, Christian appearances, or any other "deed" cannot contribute to the sinner's salvation. The sinner must understand and believe that he is simply and solely justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It is a believer's faith that saves. And it is faith that God mercifully and graciously grants to the sinner. When God gives saving faith it is an enduring, a confident, a relentless, a pursuing, and a persevering faith.

V. Soli Deo Gloria

The Reformers encapsulated all of the Solas under this final truth that everything results in glory to God alone. All of salvation from beginning to end — from first to last — is all sourced in, mediated through, and resulting in the glory of God alone. There is no human merit whatsoever. It is all a result of God's grace and designed by God to make much of His great worth and His abundant supremacy. For from God and through God and to God are all things; to Him be glory forever (Rom 11:36). Everything that happens in human history and everything that culminated with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross to pardon sinners and propitiate the Father's just wrath is to lead to the unending and eternal praise of God's glory. He is infinitely worthy of praise, honor, adoration, delight and this happens when we have right and proper thoughts of Him. And when this happens, we glorify Him. Thus, everything pertaining to life and especially all matters relating to a sinner's salvation is to result only in the glory to God alone.