

The 5 Solas: Sola Scripture (Scripture Alone) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 & others

INTRODUCTION

Today, we begin a new sermon series titled **The Five Solas**. Here's some background to the 5 Solas. In 1521 the German Reformer, Martin Luther, was summoned to appear in Worms before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V to defend what he had taught and **written**. Soon after he arrived, it was clear that he wasn't brought there to defend his views; he was brought there to recant (deny, disavow) his views.

For Luther, it was all about the Bible. It was all about the teaching and the authority of the Scripture. He didn't trust the pope. He didn't trust the councils. He had seen how they contradicted the Bible and each other. He had seen their corruption, and he couldn't trust them. Martin Luther trusted in the Scriptures alone. And we should as well.

My message this morning is entitled, "**Sola Scriptura.**" It's the first of five topical messages that I want to bring to you over the next five weeks. And in these next five weeks, we will be looking at what are often referred to as "**The Solas.**" These "**Solas**" are the core of what those in the Protestant Reformation believed. **In case you don't know**, the "**Protestant Reformation**" took place in the 1500's, when men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and others "protested" against the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church. And eventually split the church into the "Protestants," those who "protested" against the church, and the "Catholics," those who remained in the mother church. Our theological heritage can be traced back to the Reformers of this day.

You say, "**What are these 'Solas'?**" I'm glad you asked. The **first** is called, "**Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone.** That is, **we look to the Scripture "alone" for our authority and guidance in matters of faith and practice.**

Next week, we will look at "**Sola Gratia, Grace alone.** **That is, salvation is entirely a gift of God.** Our salvation isn't based on or merited by anything that we do. There is nothing we do to merit God's grace. It is only by the grace of God that we are saved.

The next week, we will take up, "**Sola Fide, Faith alone.** **That is, salvation comes by faith alone in Jesus.** You don't combine your works with your faith to obtain salvation. It comes through trust in Jesus, the Messiah.

Fourth, we will look at "**Solus Christus, Christ alone.** **That is, our salvation comes only through Christ.** It does not come through the sacraments or traditions of the church, but only through Jesus.

Finally, we will look at "**Soli Deo Gloria, Glory to God alone.** We take no glory for ourselves. All the glory for our salvation goes to God, both now and for all eternity. **Our lives are to be lived for the glory of God.**

Putting all together, we can confidently **state**: "**According to the authority of Scripture alone, we are justified (saved) by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for the glory of God alone.**" Amen?

Now, a comment on these words. In case you haven't noticed, they are all in Latin. They all begin with this word, "Sola" or "Solus" or "Soli." The exact form of the word depends upon the case of the noun it modifies. But, the meaning of the word is clear, "alone," or "only," like our word, "solo." It's a big deal when an airplane promising pilot takes a flight without an instructor. It's called a "**solo flight.**" In the same way, all of these terms describe an aspect of salvation that doesn't need to be accompanied by anything else.

We look to the Scriptures "alone." We are justified by faith "alone." We are saved by grace "alone." It is on the merit of Christ "alone." And we are to live to the glory of God "alone." All of the reformers believed in the "Solas." They didn't know them by that name. The formal arrangement of these "Solas" didn't come about until the 1900's. They have come about in an effort to define what exactly it was that drove the reformers of the Reformation. And if men like Luther and Calvin and Zwingli and Hus and Wycliffe and Tyndale had heard these five solas grouped together like this, they would have gladly affirmed their belief in these things. There is no doubt about that, for each of them said things that justified all five of these statements. They simply didn't say it this exact way.

Why is Sola Scriptura important today?

Let's dig in and find out. First, please note...

I. The _____: what is truth? Who or what is our _____ of authority?

The Roman governor Pontius Pilate famously asked Jesus, *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38) *What is actually true? What is authoritative? What is "final truth"?* From the playground to the White House, we are all living our lives according to an authority that we believe to be true, right, or somehow best. You are even evaluating what I have just said according to your own grid of whether what I am saying squares with reality as you believe it to be.

QUESTION: *"Is there some final, ultimate authority you can use to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad? Is there some final, ultimate authority you can depend on as a guide for your daily life?"* Well, in the 21st century, you and I could list reason/intellect, emotions/experiences, traditions and yes, the Bible. There are sources of authority inside of ourselves (intellect/reason, emotions/experiences) and sources outside of ourselves (traditions and the Bible).

It was not the same in the 16th century. See, in the days of the Protestant Reformation (1500's), the Roman Catholic Church had a hold on the truth. **And it wasn't about the Bible. It was about the priests and the popes and the councils.** What the popes and councils said ruled the day. They were the keepers of the truth. They were the interpreters of Scripture. In their day, knowledge of the Bible was scant. And the church was doing little by way of education to change that. By and large, the people were kept in the dark about the Bible. **If Scripture and tradition are equal, but nobody can read Scripture, effectively the Church IS over Scripture.**

So, there's the problem...

II. What's the _____? Sola Scriptura (_____ Alone)

Please turn in your Bible to 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

What we are after is Scripture is the authority over the **church**. The key phrase is the first one: *"All Scripture is breathed out by God."* The word *"All"* encompasses the entirety of writings that are Scripture. What makes writings Scripture? What gives it its authority? It is *"breathed out"* by God. Now God doesn't have lungs, but this is language that accommodates our understanding of the way things work. When we speak, we must breathe out. If you try speaking while breathing in you make weird noises. **Words require breathing out.** All Scripture is God breathing out, He spoke. Scripture is God talk. It is God speaking to us. Its character flows from its source. Scripture comes from God. Its authority comes from Him. It isn't made Scripture by decree of the church. It doesn't have authority if the church says it's authoritative. Jesus said, *"For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."* (Matthew 5:18) God trumps the church and any tradition. That is the *"out"* of Sola Scriptura. God breathed out His Word to us in written form. This is known as _____. God breathes out a written Bible that is therefore inspired by God.

But this necessitates other truths. If God is the source of Scripture, then it must be truthful and perfect. _____ and _____ are two words that address these realities. Both of them flow from the character of the author God. Since God is the source, Scripture must be true because God is true. Nothing false. In Him there is no darkness at all. So, His Word is without error (inerrant) and without the possibility of being false (infallible).

Two further observations...

A. What Sola Scriptura doe mean – Just me, my Bible, and Jesus

B. What Sola Scriptura _____ mean – _____ is the supreme _____ over the church and _____ in all matters of faith and practice

Sola Scriptura means Scripture is the supreme authority over the church. The Bible recognizes reason and traditions but only the Bible is the infallible, inerrant and authoritative word of God. ***Sola scriptura* means that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of the Christian.** The sufficiency of Scripture says that God's Word is complete, lacking nothing we need, and fully capable of providing truth to believe and live the life to which God has called us.

Sola Scriptura does not mean that all truth is found in the Bible. Geometry and biology and other sciences discover and describe truth. **They may not interpret it rightly,** but God's truth is found beyond the Bible because all truth is God's truth. It means the Bible is sufficient for what we need to know, believe, and live. *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”* (2 Peter 1:3)

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Having a Bible is one thing. What do I do with it? What is my relationship to God's Word? How do I apply Sola Scriptura to my life today?

Here's a few thoughts to consider:

1. **Scripture _____ us (We _____ to Scripture)**
2. **Scripture _____ us (We _____ on Scripture)**
3. **Scripture _____ us (We _____ on Scripture)**
4. **Scripture through us (We live out Scripture)**

One person put it this way: **Sola Scriptura leads to life Scriptura.**

We are the sum of our decisions. God's Word and wisdom will guide us toward decisions that please God. When my mind is renewed and saturated by God's Word, the inclinations of my heart lean toward the things God wants in my life. With those decisions come the blessings of God on my life. The house of my life is built on the rock and my decisions and directions are too.