

Soli Fide (By Faith Alone)

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INTRODUCTION

- During the month of October, we are talking about the men, events, and teaching of the Protestant Reformation.
- We have already talked about John Wycliffe, who is considered to be the grandfather of the Reformation.
- We also talked about John Huss, that fiery forerunner.
- Today I want to talk about the one of the solas that's the hallmark of the Reformation.
- All the solas developed over time.
- “The earliest phrases were sola gratia (by grace alone) and sola fide and sola scriptura” (<https://heidelblog.net/2008/09/whence-the-reformation-solas>).
- Sola fide was used by Martin Luther in his translation of [Galatians 3](#).
- He also used it in his lectures on Galatians (ibid., heidelblog.net).
- This sola is what Paul said in the last part of [Romans 1:17](#), which is a quote from [Hab.2:4](#), “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”
- Two questions arise out of this verse:

• One...

- Whose righteousness?

• and two...

- Whose faith?
- The doctrine of justification by faith alone is the article upon which the church stands or falls.
- This article is so important that Luther said, “if we lose it, we lose Christianity.”
- If you don't have the doctrine of justification by faith alone, you don't have the gospel, and if you don't have the gospel, the church has no reason to exist.
- The church itself ceases to be a church and falls into apostasy because it is the article that answers the question, what must I do to be saved? (R.C. Sproul)

- The Roman Catholic church required the continued performance of good works in order to be saved.
- In Catechism #837 it says, “Even though incorporated into the Church, one who does not however persevere in charity is not saved.”
- Other works according to their catechism includes “baptism” (#1257) and various sacraments (#1129) and the keeping of the Ten Commandments.
- Catholic theology views justification as an infusion of grace that makes the sinner righteous.
- In Catholic theology, then, the ground of justification is something made good within the sinner —not the imputed righteousness of Christ.
- The Council of Trent, Rome’s response to the Reformation, pronounced anathema on anyone who says “that the [sinner] is justified by faith alone—if this means that nothing else is required by way of cooperation in the acquisition of the grace of justification.” (John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to the Apostles*)

· It was Martin Luther who said...

| The first and highest, the most precious of all good works is faith in Christ.

| *A Treatise on Good Works* (1520)

· John Calvin said...

| Justification by faith is the hinge on which all true religion turns.

· Martyn Lloyd-Jones also said...

| If there has been one word that has stood out more prominently, especially in the history of Protestantism, than any other, it has been this great word justification.

| *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (2), 167

· A definition of what the Bible teaches about justification would simply be...

| Justification is “God’s act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely, by his grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative lawkeeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf.”

| J. I. Packer

- Paul said in [Romans 3:24-25](#), “24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.”

· There are 3 terms in this passage that I want us to understand this morning. The first is the word..

LESSON

I. “Justified” (v.24)

- The Fact that Sinners Have to Be Justified Illustrates Man’s Ultimate Problem

› What is man’s problem?

› He is a sinner

› I don’t say that lightly...

- Scripture Teaches All Have Sinned

- [Romans 3:23](#), “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

- [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#), “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

- [Romans 3:12](#), “All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.”

- The righteousness that God requires sinners cannot provide

- The only righteousness man possesses or attains within himself is unrighteousness, because that is the character and substance of his fallen nature.

- Isaiah describes in a sinner’s righteousness as a filthy garment.

- He says in [Isaiah 64:6](#), “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

- The light of righteousness comes only from above.

- That’s why man must be born from above.

- So the righteousness that God requires is that which He alone gives .

› Before we look further at this, let me say that...

- Justification is not pardon

- It is a legal declaration or forensic declaration.

- Forensics has to do with judicial judgment or declaration.

- [Charles Hodge](#) said that “justification, instead of being an efficient act changing the inward character of the sinner, is a declarative act, announcing and determining his relation to the Law and justice of God.”

- [R.C. Sproul](#) said, “If we define forensic justification as a legal declaration by which God declares a person just and we leave it at that, we would have no dispute between Rome

and Evangelicalism. Though Rome has an antipathy [deep-seated feeling of dislike] to the concept of forensic justification, this antipathy is directed against the Protestant view of it” (Imputed Righteousness: The Evangelical Doctrine).

- Forensic justification “is God’s declaration that all the demands of the law are fulfilled on behalf of the believing sinner through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
- This declaration changes the judicial standing of the sinner before God.
- In justification, God imputes the perfect righteousness of Christ to the believer’s account then declares the redeemed one fully righteous (MacArthur).
- There are 6 different aspects of justification in the NT:
 - The Bible says we are justified by grace—that means we do not deserve it.
 - The Bible says we are justified by faith ([Rom.5:1](#))— that means we have to receive it by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The Bible says we are justified by blood ([Rom.5:9](#))— that refers to the price the Savior paid in order that we might be justified.
 - The Bible says we are justified by power ([Rom.4:24, 25](#))—the same power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.
 - The Bible says we are justified by God ([Rom.8:33](#))—He is the One who reckons us righteous.
 - The Bible says we are justified by works ([Jas.2:24](#))—not meaning that good works earn justification, but that they are the evidence that we have been justified.
 - So when the believing sinner is justified, given the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled every aspect of the Law, and declared righteous.
 - Again J.I. Packer says, “Justification is “God’s act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely, by his grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative lawkeeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf.”

• The second word in this passage that we need to understand is...

II. Redemption (v.24)

- Being justified as a gift by His grace is only possible through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus
- The word “redemption” is the Greek word *apolytoseous* which comes from *apo* (from) and *lutroo* (to redeem)
- Taken together it would be “to redeem from,” and it means “to let go free for a ransom” (WSNTDICT).

- It is translated “release” in [Hebrews 11:35](#).
- Apolutrosis was commonly used of paying a ransom to free a prisoner from his captives or paying the price to free a slave from his master (MacArthur).
- The Lord Jesus bought us back from the slave market of sin.
- His precious blood was the ransom price which was paid to satisfy the claims of a holy and righteous God (MacDonald).
- Listen to several passages that talk about this:
 - [1 Corinthians 1:30](#), “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,”
 - [1 Corinthians 6:20](#), “For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”
 - [1 Corinthians 7:23](#), “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.”
 - [Acts 20:28](#), “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
- This is the meaning of “redemption”
- We have been bought out of the slave market of sin

• “Justified...redemption”. The third word is found in verse 25...

III. Propitiation (v.24-25)

- The “redemption” or payment that Jesus made on our behalf was an appeasement to God.
- We could say then propitiation means to satisfy the demands of justice.
- In biblical terms it means to satisfy the demands of God’s wrath.
- God places sin and evil under His judgement and decrees that He is going to pour out His wrath upon it.
- In NT terms what we are saved from is God.
- We are saved by God from God, from the wrath that is to come.
- Propitiation satisfies completely the demands of God’s wrath and justice, which is what the cross was all about.
- Christ as our substitute took upon Himself the wrath that we deserve to pay the penalty that was due for our guilt to satisfy the demands of God’s justice.
- In His work of propitiation, Jesus did something on a vertical level, something with respect to the Father, satisfying the justice of God for us.

- [Romans 1-3](#) puts the sinner under the wrath of God, Jesus appeased that wrath by dying on the cross for sin.
- Therefore, His sacrifice satisfied the justice of a holy God and a righteous law.
- So, through His offering of Himself, God's wrath is averted, and mercy can be shown on the basis of an acceptable sacrifice (MacDonald).
- God resurrection of Jesus reveals that He accepted His sacrifice of Himself for our sin.
- [Acts 2:32](#), “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.”

· Now as we look further into the subjection of “justification” and the “redemption” and “propitiation” of Christ, I want us to consider what this means:

IV. Salvation is Eternal because Christ and His Work is Eternal

> The Bible refers to it...

- It is an “everlasting salvation” ([Isa.45:17](#)).
- [Mark 16:20](#) refers to it as an “eternal salvation.”
- Paul refers to it as “eternal glory” in [2 Timothy 2:10](#).
- We even hear it in [John 3:16](#), “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
- What is meant by the terms “everlasting” and “eternal”?
 - The word “perish” (apoletai) in [John 3:16](#) means “to be destroyed” (WSNTDICT) or as [D.A. Carson](#) says, “To be doomed to destruction.”
 - To perish is to receive God's final and eternal judgment.
 - But [John 3:16](#) says that “whoever believes in His shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
 - Let's go back to our question, “What is “eternal life?”
 - This is the first of fifteen references in John's Gospel to the important term eternal life.
 - In its essence, eternal life is the believer's participation in the blessed, everlasting life of Christ (cf. 1:4) through his or her union with Him
 - [Romans 5:21](#), “21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - [Romans 6:4](#), “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

- [Romans 6:11](#), “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”
- [Romans 6:23](#), “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- [1 Corinthians 15:22](#), “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”
- [2 Corinthians 5:17](#), “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”
- [Galatians 2:20](#), “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”
- Jesus defined eternal life in His High Priestly Prayer to the Father: “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” ([John 17:3](#)).
- It is the life of the age to come ([Eph. 2:6–7](#)), and believers will most fully experience it in the perfect, unending glory and joy of heaven ([Rom. 8:19–23, 29](#); [1 Cor. 15:49](#); [Phil. 3:20–21](#); [1 John 3:2](#)).
- Notice again in [John 3:16](#) where Jesus says, “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
- The guarantee given to those who possess eternal life is that they will never perish.
- Genuine salvation can never be lost; true believers will be divinely preserved and will faithfully persevere (MacArthur).
- Let’s look at a few passages that talk about this:
- First, you will be divinely preserved
 - [John 6:37-40](#), “37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.””
 - [John 10:27-29](#), “27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”
 - [Romans 5:9](#), “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

- [John 5:24](#), “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”
- [Romans 8:1](#), “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- [Romans 8:29-39](#), “29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered. 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- [Ephesians 1:13-14](#), “13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”
- [Ephesians 4:30](#), “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”
 - The word “sealed” (sphragizo) means, “to set a seal upon, mark with a seal” (Wuest).
 - This was “an official mark of identification that was placed on a letter, contract, or important document.
 - The seal was made from hot wax, which was placed on a document and then impressed with a signet ring.
 - The document was thereby officially identified with and under the authority of the person to whom the signet belonged” (MacArthur).
 - In [Daniel 6:17](#) when Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den, it says, “A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king *sealed* it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel.”

- When the body of Jesus was put in the tomb, it says in [Mat.27:66](#) that they “set a *seal* on the stone.”
- In [Revelation 5:5](#) John says He “saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, *sealed* up with seven *seals*.”
- Now notice some passages that talk about the believer persevering in the faith:
 - [Matthew 10:22](#), “You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”
 - [Matthew 24:13](#), “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.”
 - [Luke 8:15](#), “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”
 - [Hebrews 3:6](#), “but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.”
 - [Hebrews 3:14](#), “For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”
 - [Hebrews 10:39](#), “But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.”

CONCLUSION

- Justification, redemption and propitiation.
- Three terms that describe our divine salvation.
- Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
- [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), “8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
- It is only in Christ that a sinner can be made and declared righteous because of the Person and work of Christ.
- Have you come to Christ for salvation?
- You’re not saved through what you offer to God.
- You’re saved by what Christ did for you!
- Trust in Him and His finished work on the cross.
- Believe, repent and confess Him as Lord.
- Let’s pray.