

1998 Summer Lecture Series (Carson City)
An Introduction to the Reformed Faith (#5)
Sola Fide: The Supremacy of God in Salvation
July 6, 1998

Introduction

Justification by faith is the article upon which the church stands or falls.

*Justification

I. Prevailing Opinions About the Nature of Faith

A. Roman Catholicism: "Faith is the supernatural virtue through which, aided by divine grace, one is enabled to believe firmly in the truth of the authority of God as He has revealed it. . . It is further one's duty to make repeated acts of faith during one's life by practicing religion, such as attending mass" The Catholic Encyclopedia, 576.

B. Charles G. Finney, "Since the Bible uniformly represents saving or evangelical faith as a virtue, we know that it must be a phenomenon of the will" Finney's Systematic Theology, 353.

C. Charles C. Rorie, "To believe in Christ for salvation means to have confidence that He can remove the guilt of sin and give eternal life. It means to believe that he can solve the problem of sin which is what keeps a person out of heaven. You can also believe Christ about a multitude of other things, but these are not involved in salvation. . . The issue is whether or not you believe that His death paid for all your sin" So Great a Salvation, 119.

D. Peale-Hagin

II. Why the Gospel of Grace Demands Faith Alone (Rom. 1:16-17) (in order to understand faith, we must start here)

A. The Righteousness of God

1. Everything God does, He does for His own glory (SDG)
2. His glory is the most valuable reality in all the universe.
3. Everything He does must uphold the worth of His glory.
4. This is the essence of true righteousness
5. Man has trampled God's glory (Rom. 1:23; 3:23)
6. God's commitment to uphold His own glory which includes justice and goodness puts Him in a "dilemma." How can God at the same time show mercy to those who have scorned His glory?

7. The answer: the gospel. It is the revelation of the righteousness of God.
- B. The Cross as a Demonstration of the Righteousness of God (Rom. 3:24-26)
 1. God vindicates His glory through His Son

Propitiation -- Justice and wrath satisfied;
 2. God upholds His glory by showing mercy through justifying fallen sinners
- C. Faith is the only response which magnified the grace of God in justification (3:25)
 1. Faith rejects our own sufficiency (or virtue)
 2. Faith focuses on God's bountiful grace (Rom. 4:14-16)
 3. Faith glorifies God as trustworthy (Rom. 4:20-21)
 4. Piper, 187

III. The Nature of Saving Faith

- A. David Brainerd's objection to a prevailing notion (Piper, 203)
- B. Saving faith is a gift of grace (Eph. 2:8-9)
- C. Saving faith is in a Person, not a proposition
 1. Christ is the sole object of our faith
 2. The propositions must be believe (contra to Rorie)
but they themselves do not save.
- D. Saving faith embraces the mind, the will and the affections
 1. The mind apprehends the truth of Christ and His gospel with agreement
2 Cor. 4:6
 2. The will embraces Christ, with a self-commitment to Him
Rom. 6:16; discipleship texts
 3. The affections delight in Christ and all that He is and has done.
Jn. 6:35; Mt. 13:44; 1 Pet. 1:8
Edwards, RA
- E. Saving faith is an obedient faith

Rom. 1:5

F. Saving faith is an enduring faith

IV. Sola Fide Exalts the Supremacy of God

A. Sola Fide exalts the righteousness of God

B. Sola Fide exalts the grace of God

C. Sola Fide shows forth the excellency of His truth and beauty

D. Sola Fide shows forth the excellency of His trustworthiness

Not faith in faith, not simply assenting to certain truths, but rather a whole-souled embrace and delightful commitment to the One who upheld the glory of the Father and demonstrated His grace.

Gal. 2:20