

Sola Scriptura-Scripture Alone!

Sermon October 15, 2017

These days, the Christian world is celebrating the reformation which was started 500 years ago by Martin Luther on October 31, 1517. The Reformation changed the church and gave an opportunity to everybody to read the Bible. The Bibles were only in manuscripts.

In 1450, the printing press was invented. The first book was printed in Guttenberg Germany, and that was the Bible, in Latin. Before the Reformation, the Bible was translated only to Latin, and only priests were able to understand that language.

One of the biggest achievements of the Reformation movement was that they translated the Bible in different languages, and were able to make more copies so everybody could read it in their own language. William Tyndale's Bible was the first English language Bible to appear in print in 1526, which was a monumental achievement in the history of Reformation.

The Bible is the ultimate and trustworthy authority for Christian faith and practice. This doesn't mean that the Bible is the only place where truth is found. Today we can read hundreds of great books from different authors and we always can learn something good, but everything else we learn about God and this world, should be interpreted in light of Scripture.

- The Bible gives us everything we need for a happy life.
- Every word of the 66 books of the Bible is inspired by God's Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit also helps us to understand and obey Scripture.

When Martin Luther and John Calvin highlighted the main messages of the Bible, they focused on extremely important things, which can be summarized in 5 key points. Today these key points are known as SOLA'S which in Latin means "ONLY BY". The Five Solas are five Latin phrases, or slogans, that emerged during the Reformation to summarize the Reformers' theological convictions about the essentials of Christianity.

The Five Solas are:

1. Sola Scriptura ("scripture alone"): The Bible alone is our highest authority.
2. Sola Fide ("faith alone"): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
3. Sola Gratia ("grace alone"): We are saved by the grace of God alone.
4. Solus Christus ("Christ alone"): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Saviour, and King.

5. Soli Deo Gloria (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone.

In the next five Sundays, we will have a brief look at each of these five points.

Today we review SOLA SCRIPTURA – BOOKS

Sola Scriptura - The Scripture Alone is the Standard, which means that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority.

When the Reformers used the words Sola Scriptura, they were expressing their concern for the Bible’s authority, and what they meant is that the Bible alone is our ultimate authority. Other sources of authority may have an important role to play. Some are even established by God such as the authority of church elders, the authority of the state, or the authority of parents over children. But Scripture alone is truly ultimate. Therefore, if any of these other authorities depart from Bible teaching, they are to be judged by the Bible and rejected. Luther declared his conscience to be captive to the Word of God saying:

“Unless I am overcome with testimonies from Scripture or with evident reasons ... for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils, since they have often erred and contradicted one another ... I am overcome by the Scripture texts which I have adduced, and my conscience is bound by God's Word.” Only the Bible was “inspired by God” (2 Peter 1:20-21) and “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Sola scriptura teaching inspired the reformers to translate the Bible into German, French, English, Hungarian and other languages.

One of my most appreciated preachers is Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who called himself Calvinist because he was distinctly Reformed in Calvin’s preaching and teaching. I will provide you a small sampling of what Spurgeon had to say about Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone. He said that everything that we read or hear has to be compared to the Bible and we have to check what the Bible says about certain thoughts or ideas. To Jesus, the Devil said some tempting ideas. Jesus’ answer was: “It is written.” The final words in a conversation should be what the Bible says as we read in Psalms: “Thus said the Lord...” and this should be the final word.

Spurgeon found the Bible to be totally authoritative and sufficient. He didn’t say “go beyond” the Bible, but “go behind” it, and then to see what God’s opinion is about a topic.

He said that: *“This volume is the writing of the living God; each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit.”*

Scripture is not a record of the words of mere men. The Scripture is the very Word of God: *“This Bible is a book of authority; it is an authorized book, for God has written it.”*

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (KJV)

Why read the Bible?

If someone wrote you love letters and you loved that person, would you read those letters or just let them catch dust?

A few weeks ago, I found a letter written to me by my mother when I was still studying at the University. My eyes were filled with tears. I am thinking to put that letter in a frame to see it and to read it often.

As believers, we must never neglect God’s love letter. He wrote those to us, to His children.

Many Christians ask, “Why should I read the Bible?” We have time to do just about everything else, but when it comes to reading Scripture, we say, “Well ... I don’t have time, I have to go.”

I would like to give you some reasons to read the Bible.

We all should set a daily time when we are reading God’s Word. We could watch TV in the morning, but we should spend time to read God’s letters as well. People are scrolling up and down Facebook and Instagram like the daily news, but they should open the Bible, too, which is more important. **Today we can read the Bible online.**

Just because we are busy, we should not neglect God’s Word. It is essential that you read the Bible daily. I know people who wake up 15 minutes early each day to have time to read the Bible before they start their day.

Some of you would ask: Why go to all that trouble, and after all, sleeping is better than reading. Right?

Please try to challenge yourself by reading God's word daily. Let Jesus Christ be your motivation and start today, it will change your life!

- **Reading the Bible helps us live life better.**
- **Reading the Bible gives us encouragement.**
- **Reading the Bible helps us to be fruitful.**
- **Reading the Bible shows us who God, our Creator, is and shows us God's character.**
- **Reading the Bible teaches us to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- **Reading the Bible keeps us from temptations and bad decisions.**
- **Reading the Bible helps us to renew our minds so we can know God's will.**
- **Reading the Bible allows us to be certain of what God said.**
- **Reading the Bible allows us to receive the desires of our heart.**

May the Lord bless you to know more about Him by reading the Bible regularly.
Amen