

"The Gospel Fire Rekindled"

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[0 : 0 0] things up a little bit in honor of a special holiday that's coming up most of you will be familiar with the regular holiday that's celebrated on october 31st but today we're going to be i'm going to be preaching in light of a better holiday that falls on that date reformation day the celebration of the start of the protestant reformation in light of that i have a few questions for us to ask ourselves how is one made right with god what can stand against the weight of sin that we all possess and what can suffice to cleanse it away can churches and religious practice can those wash away our sins can the words of religious leaders and their teachings can those cleanse us from our sin and our crimes can they make us holy and blameless this question lies close to the heart of scripture we asked the same question earlier in the song what can wash away my sin and the answer echoes back nothing but the blood of jesus this is the gospel this is the good news that we are gathered around that i i labor to preach to you every sunday that we read from beginning to end in scripture that nothing but the blood of jesus can cleanse us from our sins we are sinners our sin is an affront to a holy god in this gospel of christ and his blood is our answer so take away number one everyone needs the gospel we are all sinners you are a sinner i am a sinner and every person we meet is a sinner who deserves hell and if they do not receive the gospel they will find themselves in eternal suffering because of that reality because of the gospel being the only answer to our promise of sin and because sin is common to all of mankind there is not a single person you will ever meet who does not need this truth to be plainly presented before them so that if god works they might repent and believe this coming tuesday october 31st is the 505th anniversary of the start of the protestant reformation in honor of that anniversary i want to go over a a brief history of what happened to start the reformation and then we will look at five biblical truths that are at the heart of reformation teaching these truths were recovered in the reformation to help make the gospel plain and clear that we would see that the only way to salvation is through christ and because of the reformers who fought to relight that gospel spark in the midst of a land that it had largely died out from we here today are able to receive it with much greater clarity than we might have otherwise so it is good and fitting to appreciate the work that god has done in rekindling the gospel for our sakes in the protestant reformation 500 years ago

as we as i go through this history remember that this is just not not just a a teaching but this is a memory of god's work in history for our sakes so that our hearts might be encouraged to love our god more and appreciate the ways in which he has always been working for the sakes of his people psalm 111 verse 2 says great are the works of the lord studied by all who delight in them this is the the main point of this history is to remember the great works of god in the 1500s the roman catholic church was dominant over western europe there were no other churches to speak of no other options if you grew if you lived in in western europe that you could go to hear about the bible to hear the gospel and the truths of scripture there were not baptists evangelicals anglicans presbyterians so on and so forth but there was the roman catholic church and the catholic church had come to hold that the church's interpretation of the bible and the authority of the pope were equal with the teachings of scripture themselves they taught that what the church said was just as true and just as commanding over our lives as the word of god in the bible many unbiblical teachings because of this had become part of the church's teaching and one of the worst things that the roman church began to do is to sell forgiveness for money to sell the forgiveness of sin in return for lining the church's coffers the church told you that you could pay to have your sins forgiven they had abandoned the true gospel and had started selling a fake salvation to people for their own greed they said that you could be made right with a holy just god that your heinous sins could be wiped away with a bribe one priest coined the saying that when a coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs as his slogan for hawking this forgiveness of sins and the church referred to to this forgiveness that you could purchase as an indulgence there were a number of teachers in the church who disagreed with the practice but today we remember martin luther who outraged against this practice on october 31st 1517 just a little ways back in the past he went up to the church in wittenberg germany and he had 95 arguments that he nailed to the church door against the practice of indulgences arguments from the bible as to why this was an anti-gospel an anti-christ an anti-biblical practice for the church to participate in and that it was detrimental to the health

and the souls of those within the church martin luther who we might be familiar with the name as the famous civil rights activist was named after him was a catholic monk and a teacher in wittenberg germany in studying the bible he became concerned with how unbiblical these practices were and he sought to fight against it and that would be that nailing of these arguments the 95 theses to the door would be the spark that god would use to kindle the protestant reformation and reclaim the clarity of the gospel for the sake of humanity from this this spark would spring forth a reformation which would end with a great multitude of people from all over europe leaving the catholic church in protest against the teaching and they would unite themselves under a number of men who god faithfully raised up to teach his church more accurately from the bible these protestant leaders like martin luther john calvin and huldreich zwingli luther would go on to be branded a heretic which meant that if the church caught him they would burn him at the stake for his false teaching and the church would ultimately the catholic church would ultimately go on to burn a number of people for their profession of the true gospel and their rejection of unbiblical teachings the reformation this fire that blazed out across western europe was sparked that day in germany by martin luther and scholars looking back often summarize the five main teachings that the reformers brought out in contradiction in opposition against the catholic church they summarize these ideas as the five solas these are five truths that the roman catholic church had rejected and these truths are essential to the clarity of the gospel and to the christian faith since these truths come from the bible and are all about the gospel they apply to us even here today they are not just for a medieval people living 500 years ago but we need these truths now and so it is fitting and proper for us to take the time to remember these truths that we might like the protestant reformers continue to fight for the clarity of the bible and of the gospel that we could pass it on to future generations unmuddled with human teaching but purely the words and truths of god by the way these these five solas are latin phrases i'm going to give you the latin phrases for the sake of history but then after that i will tell you the english translation so if you don't if you don't speak latin feel free to write the english translation in your notes if you do speak latin i'm impressed come talk to me after i'd like to see it in action and write it down and show off a bit so the first

sola sola scriptura which means scripture alone that is that that no truth out there in the world that anyone would try to to put out will ever have as much authority or be as true as the things written in the bible that scripture alone is the final authority on all things that it is the ultimate instruction for the believer and no other instruction that comes from anyone can compete with the bible for authority in the believer's life the question of what is the final authority over Christians would have been answered by the catholic church that it is the bible and the church's teachings and by doing so they had taken the doctrines of man and elevated them to the level of the word of god doing so they made it hard to be clear about what truths believers should most firmly submit to and follow after the reformers rightly saw that the teaching of scripture is the final authority so let's turn to second

Timothy chapter three you'll find you'll find it on page 1826 in the pew bibles that's 1826 second Timothy chapter three and here we will read just one verse of many reasons to believe that the bible is god's holy inspired inerrant and trustworthy word there is nothing no other authority that compares to the words in this book nothing else calls for our submission as highly as this bible does we must submit to this book as we submit to god himself above all other things read with me second Timothy chapter three verse 16 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 complete thoroughly equipped for every good work this is your ironclad promise from the mouth of god himself spoken through men that the words of this book are his words and they have been given for your good there is no authority besides this no authority equal or greater than the words of scripture these are our instructions so take away number two obey the words of scripture

[15 : 31] Jesus says in John 5 24 most assuredly I say to you he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment but has passed from death to life if you want to live obey these words hear them follow them for scripture alone has the power of life and death if you want to escape judgment obey these words and draw near to the savior Moses can say in Deuteronomy that when he gave the words of God before the people that that was the same thing as setting before them the choice between life and death that you would have life if you listened and death if you rejected the most important question you can ask in your life is what will you do with this book and the

Jesus that it preaches and the ultimate instruction is that you must obey these words by the grace of God obey these words for they are what determine whether you live or die not the words of the Catholic Church not the words of people on the street or on the TV not the words of people with degrees but the words of this Bible not even the words of a man standing in Christ Baptist Church preaching to you the best thing I have to say is the things that this Bible says and remember that the Bible does not just have authority in one area of your life like a doctor might only have authority in the area of medicine but you would not be quick to accept legal advice from a doctor while you might trust his medical opinion the Bible is not like that with one area of authority like oh the

Bible tells us how to do church but it doesn't tell me how I need to to behave when I'm at work no the Bible has authority over every area of your life it is all encompassing and there is no grounds to which you can say the Bible doesn't get to tell me what to do here Deuteronomy 6 6-9 says and these words which I command you today shall be in your heart you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house when you walk by the way when you lie down and when you rise up you shall bind them as a sign on your hand they shall be as frontlets between your eyes you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates this passage means to say that that the word should dwell in every aspect of your life take away number three never accept other authorities as equal to scripture's authority never accept other authorities as equal to scripture's authority my authority you will find everywhere in your life and it is a good thing my boss uses his authority to keep the company going to sign paychecks that help me to pay for my food and my living and my car his authority is good for me parents are to use their authority to teach children right and wrong and about the bible and about the gospel their authority is good but no authority that we find in the world is equal to scripture the greatest authority we have is the bible the words of parents or governments or bosses or schools are not equal to the words of god this means that you must never obey a command that goes against the clear teachings of scripture there is no position that someone can be in on earth that gives you freedom to disobey the words of scripture you must above all else submit to that authority you do not lie for your parents you must preach the truth even if the government and the nation should call it hateful you must obey the law even if your boss tells you to break it you especially must not listen to me or other people in the church especially people in positions of honor if our teaching goes against what the bible says you have my permission to disobey anything i tell you that is not based up on and backed up by the words of god i only have authority people in the church and in the world only have authority in so far as they are underneath the word of god never accept other authorities as equal to scripture the second sola sola christus that is christ alone salvation is by him and his work alone the roman

church offered something different they offered jesus plus some things in life are better with a plus you know if you offered me first class plus i'd probably take it or a new car plus by all means send it my way but if i was married and you offered me my wife plus another woman that plus is no longer a good thing or if i go to the bank and i go to to take out my money plus a bit more now i'm robbing so when the church when the roman church offered forgiveness in christ plus indulgences forgiveness in christ plus forgiveness in confession salvation in christ plus salvation in these sacraments as you go through them they broke faith with christ as an adulterous husband breaks faith with his spouse only in jesus and in his death and resurrection can we be saved there is no jesus plus it is jesus alone christ alone sola christus turn with me to acts chapter four you'll find it on page 1683 of the pew bibles and let us ask ourselves do we need a jesus plus is this savior not enough for us are there other places that i must go to add on to the salvation that jesus gives me since he's not enough let's read the answer to these questions in acts four verse twelve nor is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved that is christ alone that verse could just as well say sola christus only christ there is no other need and there is no other option than jesus jesus alone is our salvation never get it confused if you are busy about church things it can be easy to think that those might save you going to church does not save you reading your bible does not save you being a nice person does not save you even preaching in church week in and week out will not save me well these are all good things and if you are truly saved you will go to church and you will read your bible you will try to be a nice person but you are not saved by these things you are saved by christ alone take away number four rejoice rejoice in salvation through christ alone this is good news because if it's christ plus something you add to it you're going to hell if jesus's

work on the cross is not enough to wash away your sins there's nothing you can add that's going to get you in the door there's nothing better than jesus to offer so if if christ alone is not enough then we're hopeless and so it is good news to hear that all you need is christ if you have jesus you have everything so rejoice jesus is so good so amazing that if you try to mix anything with him it's a loss rejoice in the savior who has done it all sola christus the third sola sola fide that is faith alone salvation is received solely by trusting or having faith in christ turn with me to galatians chapter 2 you'll find it on page 1789 shouldn't be too far from where we were the catholic church had turned away from gospel purity they had turned away from the free gift of christ by saying that you were saved on the basis of faith and good works not faith alone that to be justified with god you must earn it to some degree mind you we know that believers must do good deeds james writes faith apart from works is dead but when we think about how we are made right with god we must be clear that it is by faith alone and that none of our good deeds will ever make us right this verse makes it clear galatians 2 16 read with me knowing that man is not justified by the works of law but by faith in jesus christ even we have believed in christ jesus that we might be justified by faith in christ and not by the works of the law for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified do you have flesh then there's no chance you're ever going to be justified by it or by your works your only hope is through faith alone justification which is a fancy word for being declared right or being declared good that justification only happens through faith in jesus there is nothing we can do to get right with god apart from faith in jesus you cannot earn it it is all received through faith so take away number five work because you are saved not so that you may be saved work because you are saved not so that you may be saved jesus has done it all in the moment that you truly believe you are made right with god

[29 : 57] there is no need for anxiety as if Jesus was not enough and you must labor hard to add something to it or as if you must do a certain amount of good for God to be willing to love you but be at peace for you are safe because faith alone is enough Romans 8:1 preaches this beautiful comfort to believers there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus nothing remains because justification is not a matter of works but it is by faith alone the soul on Christ who truly believes that moment a pardon receives not a coin in the coffer but faith in Christ so then out of love and joy obey your savior do what he commands not so that you might by some means be acceptable before God but because you have been accepted even though you have nothing to offer and so you want to do nothing but please the one who has loved you so much John 14:21 he who has my commandments and keeps them it is he who loves me and he who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and will manifest myself to him work because you have been saved not so that you may be saved the fourth sola sola gratia that is by grace alone our salvation is a gift turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2 it's the next book over you'll find it on page 1796 the Bible teaches that our salvation our escape from hell and our promise of heaven all comes to us by grace that is by God's good and generous disposition towards us his wonderful charity towards sinners and when it is by grace that means that it is a gift we do not earn it we have not deserved it but it is a gift sometimes there's something within us that makes it hard to hear that we do not deserve to be right with God our sinful hearts full of pride might recoil at this but you do not deserve heaven you do not deserve happiness you do not deserve forgiveness these are not yours by right and you have no freedom to demand them what you have earned by your decisions to sin is misery suffering and an eternity in hell and there is nothing you can do to earn your way back no amount of going to church no amount of giving to the poor no amount of works can wipe

away your sins Isaiah 64:6 says but we are all like an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags we all fade as a leaf and our iniquities our sins like the wind have taken us away I wish I remembered to bring it in with me I went out this morning into my yard with a paper towel and I rubbed it in the dirt and anyone who wants is free to come to my car with me and take it afterwards and use it to wipe their face off after they eat lunch does anyone want to take me up on that this is what our good deeds are like they don't clean our sins off they just shift the dirt around you find a man who's lazy who gets a sense of motivation and then he becomes greedy our good deeds are like filthy rags so it must be by grace alone that we receive salvation as a gift that we cannot earn read with me

Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9 for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast this is a gift it is by the goodness of God so we cannot put confidence in ourselves we have no pride to walk around and say yeah Jesus did some of it but I did the rest I worked I changed I turned my life around brothers and sisters it is by grace alone so if you are to receive Christ's salvation you must reject any idea of earning it

God will not gift you salvation so long as you believe that you deserve it but you must be humbled and say it's by him alone by grace alone I earned none of it and the good news is that it's by grace alone and God is gracious so that even though you can't earn it and you don't deserve it he will give it if you were discouraged to hear the good things that you don't deserve be encouraged to hear how gracious he is to give you what you could never earn the riches of Christ the final sola soli deo gloria that is to the glory of God alone the only one who deserves glory for our salvation is God because every last bit of it from beginning to end depends on him if he did not act we would be left in

Ephesians 1 dead in our trespasses and sins so it is like this if I'm in a burning building and through my grit and determination I push through a couple areas of danger and with my endurance I put myself in a spot where a firefighter can save me I deserve some of the credit for getting out of there but if I find myself in that burning building and my reaction is to curl up into a ball in fear and a firefighter rushes in and saves me pulling me out where I did nothing to make it happen he deserves every last bit of the credit we are that second example we are dead in our sins and trespasses we are like a drowned man in a pool we are not even good enough to cry out for help and yet

[39 : 07] God comes and rescues us he rescues us by his own power and his own goodness consider how great how grand and how glorious our God must be to save people like you and people like me to bring the dead to life and to do that through Christ on the cross showing such amazing love and the price he demands for this great salvation is nothing he gives it freely a gift to be received by grace what man can you name who shows love anywhere like this or what king has there ever been who has the power to bring people back from the dead or to free them from the punishment of their sins who is like our

God to do this amazing thing the answer is no one and so obviously every last bit of glory belongs to him take away number six give glory to God this is why you exist you were made to bring him glory this is why you have been saved you were saved to bring him glory and this is the purpose of your every breath let's close in prayer Lord God we thank you for your gospel we thank you for your goodness and the way you you have you have used men of old to preserve these truths for us even to this day in Jesus name we pray amen