

Sola scriptura

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Date: 22 October 2023

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[0:00] Pardon? Pardon? 31st of October, 1517.

! This is Martin Luther.! I don't know why I put age.! He was a monk, a theology teacher. In Wittenberg.

And that's a photograph of him doing it. We don't have many photographs of these things, but that's really rather fortunate, that one. Pardon? What did I say?

95 is what I meant. Yeah, 95. So that act, it was really, it wasn't meant to be a sort of epoch-making act, but it turned out to be as a trigger point for a cultural, political, economic, and spiritual revolution for Europe.

And as I was writing this, or going over it again, I was reading this is a very Western thing. If we had, so Angel might take a different view of being somebody from the Asian side of the world, but this is very much Western theology and Western culture.

[1:25] So a spiritual revolution for Europe. And then on to the rest of the world, primarily, I suppose, or firstly to the English-speaking world, but the continents of the world, as we shall see.

And I would say we still reap the benefits of what Martin Luther started, even today in our culture. Even though we're sort of sliding away from Christianity at one speed or another, but there's still, we're still a post-Christian society rather than a post-Hindu or a post-Muslim society.

Now, how did Martin Luther manage to challenge the Catholic Church, which was 1,500 years old at this point? How did he manage to do that?

How did he manage to have the nerve to call it a corrupt church? How did he have the nerve to manage to disagree with the Pope, who, I think the doctrine of infallibility is relatively recent, but he was the big boss?

How did he manage to do that? And the establishment, far-reaching, I've never grown up in Catholicism. Some of you might have done. You might have a sense of the power and the authority structures of what is now Rome Catholicism.

[2:44] How could he say that he had found, or perhaps better rediscovered, a better way? You know, how dare he? And, of course, the answer is Scripture. He had gospel faith in the Bible, faith in God's Word, and this has been called, this idea of faith in God's Word, the formal principle of the Reformation, meaning to say, if you like, this is the ground that the rest of the Reformation stands on.

So, what does it say in Scripture is the principle that you keep going back to. Click. Here is a timeline.

We didn't have a timeline this morning, but we've got a timeline this evening. So, 0 to 500, 501 to 1,000, 1,000 and 1,000, up to the present day. So, it's a timeline.

And so, this is the Christ. So, this is the, going back 2,000 years, this amazing intervention by God into human history, the point to which human history has been tending the fulfillment of the promises of God, the Christ, and all the events of the Christ, his incarnation, his life, his suffering, his cross, his resurrection, his ascension, all sort of bundled together, the Christ event.

And then, on from there, I put the day of Pentecost on the timeline, because this is a moment of explosive fulfillment, as this huge change takes place, that God's interest is not focused primarily upon one nation, but on all the nations.

[4:30] And there's this explosion of fulfillment beginning, I would say, on the day of Pentecost. So, just looking along this timeline, 397, the Confessions.

Who wrote the Confessions? Augustine. Yeah. So, that's sort of along there on that timeline. I'm not really a great expert at all on church history.

Towards the end of that next 500-year period, the Eastern Church and the Western Church split. So, we then have the beginnings of Roman Catholicism and Greek and other Orthodox churches. And it split down the lines of how the Roman Empire had been divided into a Latin-speaking part and a Greek-speaking part. And, of course, the churches were Latin-speaking, Greek-speaking. And this produced a fault line, which we still have today. So, going at the next 500 years, 1517, Lutheran, the Reformation.

[5:32] That's where that incident occurred, you know, nailing the 95 Theses to the chapel door at Wittenberg. And then the last 500 years, well, I would think that's reasonably worth noting.

1738, John Wesley was converted and a great instrument in the hands of God to change many people's lives.

1807 is what I could find when I looked it up. The first Protestant missionaries to China. And so, we're sort of thinking there about expansion across the globe.

My information is fairly limited. If somebody wants to correct me, they're welcome to do so. But I think we're sort of in the missionary age there when all the nations... Here we're talking about Reformation in Europe.

But it moves on out into missionaries to India, missionaries to China. Again, we probably only know the English-speaking ones and the German-speaking ones, etc., etc.

[6:39] So, a little timeline there. And what we're thinking about is what was said at that point on the timeline. A Reformation map, which I brought over from previous time.

Conflict within and against 16th century Catholicism. Again, we're in Europe. Luther in Germany. Calvin and Swingley in Switzerland.

The Huguenots in France. So, the little dots are Huguenot settlements. They were persecuted more or less out of existence. Calvin wrote very moving letters to the French-speaking missionaries under persecution.

And, yeah, the Huguenots, some of them came to Brighton, didn't they? My friend, late friend, Frank Orner Ornstein, was the pastor of the French-speaking church down somewhere near the Brighton center down there.

I've never quite worked out where it was. And by the Metropole. Yeah. You're right. And they did winemaking, didn't they?

[7:54] Yeah. Yeah. So, as I say, some of them came to England. Frank Orner Ornstein was the pastor. They came over in the, I guess in the, which century am I talking about?

Late 1500s, early 1600s. So, I always used to joke with Frank that the very few of the original members were still in membership back in the 1960s. And John Knox in Scotland, who was said that he preached so powerfully that he would, what was it?

Ding the pulpit in blats. He'd smash it to pieces. He was such a powerful preacher. Is that right? Ding or zing? We don't know, do we?

But that's what he said. He was so powerful, he would, I will think, he would ding the pulpit in blats. So, anyway, okay, just getting carried away, aren't I? Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, English Reformation, the prayer book, Thomas Cranmer, and there's also Poland.

And from Lewis, the Lewis martyrs who similarly stood as Martin Luther did for what scripture said as distinct from what the Roman Catholic Church was saying.

[9:12] There was apparently a martyr from Black Lion Street in Brighton. I'm sorry? Thank you very much, Derek Carver. So, let's have a look at how this principle works out in history and works out today, and then we'll have a look at what Jesus believed about the Bible.

So, we'll sort of do it in that order. So, let's go back to Martin Luther. Now, what is at stake for Martin Luther? The way of salvation, I think, is ultimately at stake.

And that goes back to how do you know what the way of salvation is? What is the authority on which you know it to be true?

And it basically boils down to a limited number of choices. Tradition. We've always done it that way. That's how it's always been.

This is what the, down through the centuries, has been done. Of course, non-conformist churches like ours are not immune from people saying, oh, we've always done it that way.

[10:23] We can't change anything. We've always done it that way. Whereas Martin Luther would have said, well, actually, what's it say in the Bible? Should we do this not on, perhaps on tradition, but on the church elite?

So, you have people in the church who you look up to so much that whatever they say goes. And if you're rebelling against them or questioning them, you're questioning God.

The whole thing of priests. So, Anglican ministers sometimes refer to themselves as priests. And when they become ministers, when they're set apart as ministers, they would say, some of them, but not all of them would say, they've been priested.

So, I didn't know you could make the noun priest into a verb, but apparently you can. Not all Anglican ministers would agree with that verb.

Priests as gatekeepers click. Or independent human reason. You know, look at the Bible. Well, nobody can believe that. It's not even, you know, what sensible, intelligent person.

[11:29] So, this is independent human reason. Again, I'm not a historian, but I understand that there was a time when philosophy moved in the direction of saying, human beings can work out everything for themselves.

You just need to think clearly enough. You don't need God. You don't need the Bible. You just think clearly enough and you understand everything. That movement, I understand, was called the Enlightenment.

Or is it people's experiences? Perhaps a mystical experience or an inner experience. Does that give the authority to say this is what is true?

Or is it scripture? And these are the sort of choices. The churches or spiritual lives run on tradition, priests, human reason, independent human reason, personal experience.

And this principle that we're looking at is that actually what governs everything, if you want to find the answer to something, you say, what does it say in the Bible?

[12:48] So, that's ultimately, that's the solar, means alone, what God says in scripture. We're just putting it very simply. What the Bible says is what God says.

Now, Luther stood on scripture alone, and we could ask the question, was he right to do that?

Which brings us to actually what Jesus taught, which we'll come to in a moment. But let's assume that we're believing that, as we would be doing, as those of us who are evangelical Christians.

So, this formal principle, this place to stand for Martin Luther, is actually the place for us to stand too, in a confusing world.

And where do we find the way of salvation? We find it in exactly the same place that Martin Luther did. Whoops, click too much. So, just to use a few more words on this matter of scripture alone, the Reformation can be summarized with some other something alones.

Grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, to God alone be the glory, and if you wanted to put it in Latin, which makes it much more theological, which doesn't really, it just puts it into Latin, sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus, I think sola Christus, sola Deo Gloria, so it just says grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, to God alone be the glory.

[14:34] So, what this means is that, scripture is the unrivaled final authority, in all matters upon which it speaks. So, if you wanted to know the rules of chess, you wouldn't expect the Bible to give you the final word on that.

That's not really what the Bible is speaking about. But you could put it this way, in all matters upon which it speaks, if the Bible says something, then that is authoritative, or you could say, some way of putting it, in all matters of faith and conduct, the things that we're to believe for salvation, the way we're to live.

I mean, as I say, the Bible doesn't tell you how to, how to ride a bicycle, or how to play chess. You have to work that out for yourself.

But the things upon which it does speak, it is authoritative. And that carries along with it, the idea of, is it clear? So, that is called the perspicuity of Scripture.

Perspicuity just means clear. And, the idea being that on all the vital matters, Scripture is clear, given that you use the available means.

[15:53] So, just have a think about it. If you read the Bible, carefully, prayerfully, using available means, which I'll come to a little bit more in a moment, you will be able to understand it.

I think it was Augustine who said of John's Gospel, that it is deep enough for an elephant to swim, but safe enough for a child to paddle. And if somebody comes to Scripture, and really wants to know the way of salvation, it's clear.

You don't need a priest to tell you what it, the way of salvation. The Bible has got it clearly, the perspicuity of Scripture.

And the alone does not mean that guidance and help are superfluous. help means, as a community, we can help one another to understand Scripture.

So, somebody might say, I'd like somebody to take me through Colossians. Anybody like to read the Bible with me? And as we go through, you can explain bits to me.

[17:14] And that, you know, it isn't just the Bible alone, and you go in your corner and read the Bible alone, but you read it with other people, and it's clear. So, reading the Bible in community, having Bible teachers, past and present.

I always think a Bible teacher is a little bit like a guide in a stately home. If you go around a National Trust place or a stately home, which many of us might want to do, and you go into a room, and the guide will say, you see that window there?

That was put in by the third earl. And the reason that it has that shape is that he used to like hang gliding through it. And that particular shape is exactly suited to hang gliding through it.

He wouldn't say that really, would they? But you have, you're not, the guide isn't adding anything to the architecture, but the guide is showing you what's there and pointing out so that you can now say, oh yeah, I see that.

And I think this is what Bible teachers do. They don't invent truth, but they just point out what's already there and help you perhaps to see connections, help you to see the flow, and things like that.

[18:28] Of course, the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, and we all need help with Hebrew and Greek. It's called a Bible translation, isn't it?

So, somebody had to do the translating, and that person helps us to read the Bible and find it clear, and we find the way of salvation.

What I'm just saying is, you can't really say, Scripture alone means, give somebody the Hebrew text, send them off into a corner, it'll all become clear. We need one another in this sort of Scripture alone thing.

And also, history helps us, because over history, over the period of history, men and women, spiritually minded people, have wrestled with new questions that have come up, new objections that have been brought up, new clarification, and God has used people over the centuries in this task of theology to work out things for our benefit that perhaps people in other centuries might have never even thought of.

Okay. Does that make sense? So, Scripture alone means those things. Well, looking at it in history, Martin Luther was debating whether the church was right to do various things to declare salvation from and to God.

[20:05] So, the thing that we always remember is the indulgences, that, was it Tetzal, Friar Tetzal, had got this great idea for money making, raising money for the church, that he would say that you pay some money and you pay, we'll pray and on the basis of our prayers, your relative, perhaps who has died, will be let off so many years of purgatory.

So, the selling of these indulgences, I might be getting the details of it wrong, but that sort of thing. when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs, I mean, he didn't say it in English, but I suppose that's an English approximation.

I mean, it's the most crass and ugly equivalent of providing salvation, you pay the money. I mean, how far from the Bible could you get?

It's not about Jesus, it's not about grace, it's not about him dying on the cross, it's just really about making money through what you would say priestcraft. The idea that we get salvation through our works, that we have to try harder and our works are added into the balance for our salvation.

So, this is really saying that what Jesus did is not enough. And how insulting is that to the Lord Jesus? What he did is absolutely enough. We don't have to add our good works to it.

[21:46] I have a very hazy memory of pilgrimages that, I don't know, did Martin Luther do a pilgrimage? So that he crawled along such and such till his knees bled and thought that this would give him peace for his soul.

It might be that, yeah. And it was a really torturous thing to do. And he was working on the assumption that this would save his soul, but no.

Now his opponents said, putting it simply, well the Pope says so, or the church councils have agreed this, and Luther said, unless you can show me from the Bible, I will not back down.

So he was sort of put on trial, wasn't it? And the catchphrase that's attributed to him is, here I stand, I can do no other.

My conscience is bound to the word of God. So that was the way that Martin Luther tackled, or was tackled, by issues in those days.

[22:57] and no doubt we'll be looking at some more of those as we go through the other solas in coming weeks. But let's have a little think about what we would say on the basis of scripture.

So I've got some possible questions. So a church going friend says same-sex sex is a matter of people's personal choice.

and they say you shouldn't judge, love is love, you should be true to your heart. If you're a sola scriptura person, what would you say to your church going friend?

So this is somebody who says they're a Christian. Here's another one. A non-Christian neighbor says, ooh, you're an evangelical. What does that mean?

And if you start on, we believe the Bible, then your neighbor says, you can't possibly believe the Bible in this day and age, can you?

[24:02] What would you say there? And this one is hypothetical. A member of your church says, the Lord has told me that you must sell your house and be a missionary in Nepal.

How would you answer that if you were a sola scriptura person? So that's the little bit for discussion. What I'd suggest is if you on this side start with the first one and if you start with the last one and then you can sort of, if you've run out, you can try the other ones.

Is that okay? So you'll start with the middle one. Yeah? Does that make sense to discuss that? So what should we say?

Seven minutes? Seven minutes, that's till 12, 12 past. Have a chat about, if you're a sola scriptura person, how would you answer those questions?

Okay, we've overrun a little bit on that discussion. Let's just have a little bit of feedback.

[25:15] feedback. I didn't allow time for a lot of feedback. But this group here, you were discussing if somebody says the Lord has told me that you must sell your house and be a missionary in Nepal, what did you think would be a good answer?

I think. Come on. Oh, right. Okay. Well, at least three of us thought that the suitable answer would be, well, the Lord hasn't told me yet.

Yes. But we did have quite a good discussion about it in the sense that, I mean, the Lord guides, the Lord guides us through his word, but also sometimes through other people. people. But we would always go to God's word first. And we did spend a bit of time discussing the sort of the middle ground here.

You know, there are extremes where somebody might say, the Lord has told me and says something which we know to be unbiblical.

[26:40] So, there is a sort of, but there is a sort of middle ground where we need wisdom, basically. A sort of grey area in the middle.

I mean, I think probably Aaron had a couple of quite good points here. Well, I might have done, I can't remember what they were though. Well, the middle ground where, I mean, in this particular case, the Lord has told me that you must sell your house and be a missionary in Nepal. I think we would be foolish if we went home and put the house on the market. But, sorry. It's not automatically wrong, is it? I mean, maybe that is the right way forward. But, sometimes people have not, have begun to recognise that God is calling them perhaps to serve abroad through what other people say to them, perhaps. Or, perhaps, other people recognise their gifts which might be valuable in a certain place. So, it's not a cut and dried thing.

[28:15] No, but you wouldn't, it's cut and dried in the sense that you wouldn't, just because somebody says the Lord has told me. You wouldn't automatically do it just on the basis of that. No.

Yeah. One of the things I thought of is that there's an element there if you were to do something along those lines, is there's a lack of self-control in terms of you're not really thinking, are you, you're letting someone else think for you, you're not running a situation past Jesus in prayer and waiting for a response directly.

It's kind of third party information, isn't it? And we know the fruit of the spirit is patience and self-control. And I think that applies not just to our tempers, but in situations where we're wondering what to do.

Yeah, thank you. I think there's wisdom in community, isn't it? If other people, what do other people think?

But at the end, it's all got to go through the grid of scripture, hasn't it? Does this fit with what I generally know from scripture? And the whole wisdom thing, which I think is what you mentioned, is informed by scripture, isn't it?

[29:36] Yeah. Thank you very much. Let's see what these guys say. So you're an evangelical, Pete. you're an evangelical.

What does that mean then? Yeah, so David came up with a very good verse, which was familiar to us, but yeah, which is obviously familiar to all of us, which is 2 Timothy 3.16, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, profitable doctrine, reproof and correction for instruction in righteousness.

So that was our starting point. But additionally, what does it mean? Well, of course we believe in the Bible, but what we can see through the Bible is throughout centuries, through the Old Testament, evidence and proof.

So we've got historical evidence, we've had over decades and centuries prophetic shadows pointing towards a Savior and to the Christ, and we've had fulfillment of that.

And then in the New Testament, through many, many scriptures, we can see the fulfillment of scripture. So this gives us confidence in the Bible, the Bible fulfills itself, so we can use scripture against scripture, if you like, or not against, but supporting itself.

[31:20] But even having said all of that, I mean, there is always going to be this element of faith. Yep. So we have to believe it, and that would be given by God. That's right. I think we need the, could our Sima have the microphone, please, so that there might be one or two people listening at home, so they could.

I was asked the other day, by some people I know, what makes you think, or what makes you positive that the Bible is true, and not the Quran?

How can you say one is true, and the other one is not true? Thank you. Yeah, I mean, my answer, I've been a few times in conversation with friends that are atheists or whatever, have been asked similar things, and my stock answer is that I see, like Pete was saying about evidence, I see the hard evidence in my life.

I was a person who couldn't give up smoking, I was chain-smoking and doing all, you know, a lot, and for it to suddenly end without me really, apparently putting much effort in, was the work of God. It was an answer to prayer, we saw the prayer, and we saw the answer, and I see hard evidence in my life of change, which fits in with scripture. That's how I would answer that, but yeah.

[33:01] The other thing as well is, with the Bible, you've got 66 books written by numerous different people from different backgrounds, farmers, kings, prophets, over a period of almost, you know, 1,500 years, a long

span of time, that has, over, as people have said, over the space of time, has been, you know, found to be very truthful and very consistent, recent, and has had such a kind of wide impact across the world, and is far more, is a more ancient book as well than the Quran.

So, I mean, there were just some things that I would think about. I mean, an answer that I'd love to give to somebody who was saying that was, well, have you ever read it? Would you like to read John's Gospel?

Why don't we sit down and read it, and then you can make up your own mind? I mean, that would be a fantastic thing if they said yes, wouldn't it? So, there was a chap in America who was a complete atheist, very, very clever and successful chap, I can't remember his name, and he said, when I retire with all my wealth, what I'm going to do is I'm going to go through the Bible, I'm going to take all these prophecies, and I'm going to check them out for myself, and I'm going to disprove this nonsense, and he basically went through, as he saw it, sorry, I shouldn't say that, but as he viewed it, and he went through, and basically, by the time he'd got through and gone through all these different prophecies and things that were basically fulfilled in the New Testament, he said, well, he was compelled and convicted, and he said, this has to be true.

Yeah. It was his lifetime's work to, you know, in his retirement to try and do this. I can't remember the name of the book. It's a bit like J.B.

Phillips, isn't it, who moved the stone, wasn't it, that he tried to disprove the resurrection and ended up being convinced by it. I mean, I think one of the things about the Bible is it is ultimate authority, and anything that claims to be ultimate authority, the only authority upon which you can prove its ultimate authority is itself.

[35:35] Because there is nowhere higher to go to prove it. It is the highest point, isn't it? So I think that's why people reading the Bible is the only way they're going to be convinced of it, by actually reading it and find, yeah, this is God speaking.

And of course, once you've heard that and seen who Jesus is, and heard his claims, he himself rules out other ways, doesn't he?

And there's only one God, but God. So that would be an answer to, well, why don't you also believe the Koran? Well, I don't have to, because Jesus has told me it's all there with him, and I believe him.

I'm sorry? There are errors in the Koran, very obvious errors. I've never read it, so I would have to take your word for that.

I've read it in English. I read a book years ago when I first got saved, and it was a woman, I think she's Iranian, and in a Muslim family, but wasn't convinced that Koran was the word.

[36:50] So she read the Bible and the Koran at the same time, to see which one was true. And the more she read it, the more she read the Bible and put down the Koran, and then became a believer, and then had to flee Iran and her family.

And the title of the book was I Dare to Call Him Father. Yes, it was, what was the name of the lady? I have no idea. I've read that one as well, yeah.

Billquist Shake, was it Billquist Shake? I'm going to move us on in a minute. Oh, you guys haven't had a chance to answer.

I know, there might be a few of them. Would somebody like, just to comment on, if somebody says, I'm a Christian, but you should be true to your heart, what would you say to that?

Apologies to everyone else in the group, I've only remembered what I actually said. So, yeah, we chatted around these things, and I kind of said, look at the scriptures, and we see right from the beginning, God creating the world, God creating human beings.

[38:09] We see a picture of a perfect relationship with God, which, of course, was then broken as Adam and Eve rebelled, and the same sex.

Sex is clearly a sign of our rebellion against our good creator God. But what the Bible is calling us to is to know God's relationship with him being restored, and actually what he says is really good for human flourishing.

flourishing, and that is not. Thank you. Thank you. Let's move on. What did Jesus think about scripture?

So, I mean, we've said what Martin Luther said, and I'm sure we are in agreement with that, but let's just go back and see what did Jesus think about scripture?

scripture. So, as I might have said before, I had a friend who was asking me these similar sort of questions, and I think one of my responses, well, what did Jesus make of the Bible?

[39:15] I put those into three groups. Would, you can do as many of them as you like, but if the group over here starts at the top of the list and goes down, if you would like to start in the middle of the list and go round, and if the group over here would like to start at the bottom of the list and go round, we will have, between us, have covered all of them, and if you give, I don't know, five, seven minutes to look them up just to discuss them, what do they, what do these tell us about Jesus' own attitude to scripture?

Communication with, he's saying, well, what do you think the Bible is? And I'm saying, I think it's the word of God. Why do I think that? Well, I would like to be in alignment with what Jesus taught, and if Jesus taught and thought it, that's good enough for me, actually.

So what did Jesus teach and think? Should we just have one text from each group, if anything struck you from each group?

Where's the microphone at the moment? Oh, it's there. So could we have a text from this group that is indicative of what Jesus thought about scripture?

scripture? Oh, yeah.

[40:50] Chapter four. Yes. So we were just looking at that passage where Jesus is tempted by the devil and Jesus keeps saying, replying to the devil, what it is written, it is written.

He has a very, clearly has a very high view of scripture. But of course, someone added, the devil quotes scripture back at him. Yeah. But he's twisting scripture.

He's not using it. Why is he? He's using it. Yeah. So, yeah. To tempt Jesus into sin. But, yeah, Jesus knew his scripture.

What a good comment. Yes. He thought very highly of it, didn't he? Yeah. He knew scripture. So just taking a verse out of context didn't trip Jesus up because he knew really the whole current of scripture.

And of course, people do, people who are wrong quote scripture. I mean, Jehovah's Witnesses, will quote scripture. But it's really a question of the right way of understanding scripture, putting it in context, comparing scripture with scripture, not just looking at the bits that you're told to look at, but looking at the whole thing, seeing how it all flows and how it all fits together.

[42:09] And of course, Jesus, the absolute master of picking a verse that sums everything up and just answers everything, hits the nail on the head.

So thank you. Let's try this group. You were looking at probably some other verses. Did you have one that came to mind? Jesus's view of scripture. scripture. The most straightforward one was Matthew 7, 24 to 26.

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house.

Yet it did not fall because it had foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

So, yeah, we thought that the rock was very much the word of God, scripture. So that's what we need to be based in our life on.

[43:22] Thank you. Yeah. I mean, it's particularly the words of Jesus, isn't it? Whoever hears these words of mine and does them. If you hear the words of Jesus and you don't take them seriously, that's your eternal salvation down the tube, isn't it?

Because it is, you can't separate, you can't say, well, I love Jesus, but I don't actually believe what he said. Well, I'm not interested in what he said. I mean, loving Jesus is hearing, taking it totally on board, putting it into practice.

And that extends across all God's words, but here it's particularly the words of Jesus. Daniel's looking really puzzled. Have I said something wrong?

Okay. Right. Yeah. Can we pass it along over here, please? Thank you.

Yes. Yes, we saw, well, we're three. I'll just choose the first one. So this is Jesus speaking in response to a question about divorce.

[44:42] Yeah. So Jesus replied, haven't you read? But at the beginning, the creator made the male and female and said, for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.

And the two will become one flesh. So they're no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate. So Jesus is unequivocal.

So what we see in God's word is what we should act upon or refute.

If God refutes it, then we refute it. If he says it should be like this, that man and woman will be joined, then they shouldn't be separated because God has joined them.

Thank you. Can I just push that a little bit further? However, in Matthew 19, 4, just reminding us we're looking at what Jesus' attitude to scripture was.

[45:48] Haven't you read that at the beginning, the creator made the male and female? So this is God. The creator made the female and said, so that the creator says, for this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh.

Now actually, if you look back in Genesis, that is not a quote from the Lord. That is the writer of Genesis speaking.

Do you want to look it up? What is it? Genesis 2.24. Genesis 2.24. Genesis 2.24.

Yeah. The man said, this is bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh, etc. Then the narrator says, verse 24, this is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they both became one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame. That's not a quote from the Lord. That is just what it says in Genesis. But according to Jesus, that is the creator speaking.

[47:01] And I think that, you know, if you just add that little tweak to what Roger said, I think it makes it even more powerful, doesn't it? So what it says in the Bible is God speaking. It doesn't have to be in quotation marks, the Lord said.

It just has to be in the Bible. And I think that is a really, you know, these things produce a really high view of Scripture, don't they? What the Bible says, God says.

So thank you. So we've been through all those. What we've been doing is looking at this matter of sola scriptura, the Bible alone.

And I'll just go back over what alone meant. We've been saying that Scripture has unrivaled final authority in all matters upon which it speaks.

It's sufficient. We don't need anything extra. It is sufficient. It is clear, perspicuity. And all vital matters, Scripture is clear. Using available means.

[48:10] For one of them, most of us will need a translation. But using available means like community, helping one another understand the Bible, Bible teachers of the past and present.

So God has given great Bible teachers to his church. And we were looking at Martin Luther. And noticing the historical debates and controversies.

When these questions have come up and they've been debated, which are the good, strong biblical arguments that we can look at?

This is a gift to us from the Holy Spirit, the theologians of the past, who've hammered these things out. And we are the beneficiaries of that.

So that's what we were looking at. Next week, which is it next week? Because it's by grace alone.

It's one of them, isn't it? It's either by grace alone, by faith alone, by Christ alone, or to God alone be the glory.

[49:12] Just coming back to Jesus. He knew his Bible extremely well. And I think that in itself is a challenge, isn't it? He didn't just know proof texts. He knew the whole flow of Scripture.

He knew the context of it. He knew the way it linked up. And what a wonderful thing for us to aspire to. I challenge myself with this, to really know the Bible well.

And I think it's something that you build up day by day by day. I have to confess that these days I'm reading little bits from Bible notes, which is helpful.

But I think we should aspire to studying Scripture and knowing it deeply, how it connects, etc., etc. Jesus knew his Bible extremely well. His approval covers the Old Testament and the apostolic New Testament because Jesus commissioned his apostles to convey to us the things he said.

[50:19] You remember that 40-day period where he taught them stuff and opened their minds to the Scriptures? That's not lost. That's what the apostolic writings have.

That's the rest of the New Testament. This is not a bad way of putting it. What the Bible says, God says. If God says it, there's no mistakes in it.

And it achieves what God wants it to achieve. The Bible doesn't tell us how to play chess or ride a skateboard, but it does tell us how to be saved. Jesus was guided by and submitted to Scripture. And that's a challenge for us too, isn't it? You know, the temptation to solve problems our own way. The temptation to go some other way than Scripture.

But Jesus submitted to Scripture. How else will the Scripture be fulfilled, he said. And for us, an evangelical Christian is a gospel Christian who takes the Bible as being the final authority.

[51:31] We're an evangelical church. That's the stand we take. And that's not just to be difficult. It's not just because we're sort of people who like arguing.

Revering, believing, submitting to Scripture is an act of devotion to Jesus. That's what I think.

Revering, believing, submitting to Scripture is an act of devotion to the Lord Jesus.

And he says, if you love me, you'll obey my commandments. And I think that's our language of love towards the Lord Jesus, to take seriously what he said, to believe it, and to do it, and to live by it.

We're going to stop there. I've got more slides, but we're going to stop there. I hope you found that helpful. Therefore, this is not our main prayer meeting.

Our main prayer meeting is during the week, so I don't feel obliged that we should spend time praying before we go home. But we can just offer a simple prayer, which I will do on our behalf, and then we'll wind up.

[52:42] Lord, we thank you for the gift of Scripture. We thank you for the way of salvation, the very words of God. Thank you we've been able to mull these things over this evening.

Thank you for the great teachers of the past. Thank you for Martin Luther, who stood on Scripture because he could do no other. Please, in your mercy, help us to live trusting your word and doing what it says.

Have mercy on us, Lord, because we need help to do this, and pray that you'd grant us that help.

Lord, before we go home, we want to pray for one or two dear people, for Maureen, for Katie.

Thank you.