

The Five Solas

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[0:00] Welcome tonight. We're talking about the five solas. So it's basically five core truths! From the Bible and about God's free gift of salvation. So for those watching online you! can download through the QR or the URL there. How can we know God? How can we know truth? How can we know salvation?

It's a very historic kind of summary of these five truths. So we'll get into that. And why does it matter? In the 1500s the church taught that salvation required faith plus good works, traditions, rituals, the Roman Catholic Church. And Luther, Martin Luther, a monk, was exhausted trying to earn a righteousness of his own making that he could never achieve. And he asked, how can I, a sinner, find a gracious God?

And the answer wasn't in his performance but in God's promise. Because salvation is not earned, it's received, it's a gift. So the five solas put that kind of pure gospel into five simple statements.

They use some Latin words but we'll just concentrate more on the English words. And talking through each one of these tonight. So the first one, sola scriptura, scripture alone.

In other words, God's word is our final authority. There's no church traditions or human teachings that can override it. We must be biblical. So as a church, we're not a Calvinist church, we're not an Arminian church, we're a Biblicist church, we're a Bible-based church. And scripture alone is our final authority.

[1:50] And then the second one there, faith alone. Salvation comes through simple trust in Christ, not of our works or merits or by our own efforts. It's faith alone. We want to emphasise, you're saved by faith. And then you see the third one, by grace. Grace alone. God gives salvation freely.

It's a free gift. It's not as a reward. We don't work for it. We don't receive salvation as a reward, but we receive it as a gift and it's free. And God gives it freely. We don't earn it.

And then the fourth one there, it's Christ alone. Christ alone. That the Lord Jesus is the one and only saviour. There's no other way to be saved. There's no other name.

And then the fifth one, glory to God alone. Everything is for God's glory, not ours. And all the praise belongs to him. Our salvation is all glory to God. It's of his doing, the finished work.

Looking at why alone, why are they called scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, to the glory of God alone? Because it is contrary to the murkiness of trying to add to all of those things.

[3:09] And back in church history, it cost people blood, their stand. So we know Luther was excommunicated. Of course, he only went so far with some of his revelation of truth, but at least he stood for by grace through faith. And he was excommunicated from the established church of the time.

And then you've got the situation where others were burnt at the stake. You've got a cartoon depiction here of Hugh Lassmer and Nicholas Ridley. And they were burnt at the stake. And it reads there, Lassmer says to Ridley, Be of good cheer, Ridley, and play the man.

We shall this day, by God's grace, light up such a candle in England as I trust will never be put out. So they were burnt at the stake and they're still standing up for the righteousness of God's truth, of the word of God, which was in those times, it was called the Dark Ages.

So they didn't really have the light of God's word. And it was a very dark time. But yet there were some who still stood firm like those two and others. And at this time, they would chain the Bible. So they had Bibles that were chained to a pulpit.

People couldn't have really their own copy. Of course, we didn't have the freedom of printing press that we have now. And actually, the established church banned the Bible in the common language

of the people.

[4:28] So they actually burnt the Bible, the Roman Catholic Church. And so why these truths matter, these five solas, is because it's all about unleashing the scripture.

And that ignited revival and even literacy and global missions when the Bible became available in the language of the people. And so these are five fundamentals, really.

And another thing about the solas is that it tears down human striving. So it's not some performance checklist for heaven. It's merely believing and receiving.

As it tells us, the invitation, Revelation 22, 17. And the spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is a thirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

It's like taking a drink. That's salvation. It's a simple believing and receiving. And the Lord Jesus promises there, John 6, 47, verily, verily, I say unto you.

[5:27] So in other words, truly, truly, he says, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. So there's those promises there. It's simple Bible promises, Bible salvation.

So why study the solas? It's a handy little way of summarising some key Bible truths. It puts it in a nutshell.

And it's just a human resolution, I suppose, of really what is biblical and putting it in a simple summary. And these five simple statements, they help us to spot error.

And one of the key things of these times is that they're trying to add to the Bible, trying to mix works with grace. Whereas Romans 11, 6 says, if salvation comes through God's grace, it cannot depend on our good works at all.

It's not about our good works. So works and grace are two separate things, whereas someone would mix them together. And I was talking with someone on Sunday who seemed confused about salvation and thinking that we have to work, we have to deserve, we have to put our salvation into action.

[6:40] Otherwise, it's not salvation. But no, it's not about our works. Otherwise, that's a mixture and that's getting it wrong. And that's really legalism too, where we're adding to salvation, which is a gift.

Another truth about these statements is that we can get assurance because we're saved by God's promise, not our feelings. It tells us 1 John 5, 13, As a Bible-believing Christian, we can know that we have eternal life, that we can have an assurance of our salvation.

And another truth is that our lives can be transformed. As we're resting in grace, it fuels joyful obedience, not fear. Once you know that you're saved, you've got that assurance, you want to serve, you want to live for your saved, you want to live your life for his glory.

And it just follows on. It's more of a natural thing. It's not imposed because we have to. It's not out of duty. Scripture alone. In other words, everything should be measured by the Bible.

Everything ought to be measured by Scripture. And the Bible is our final authority. It's not church councils at times which contradict the Scripture.

[7:55] It's not mystical experiences. That's one of the big things of these days where people have all kinds of mystical, experiential, sensory type things, sensational type things.

And 1 John 4.1 tells us, believe not every spirit. Try the spirits whether they are of God. We've got to test everything. And this is how we test it, by Scripture alone.

What does the Bible say? What says the Lord? And it's not by culture as well. The Bible tells us, Proverbs 14.12, There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

If you just go by your feelings or by culture, you get it wrong. By feelings, Jeremiah 7. All Scripture is inspired. It's given by inspiration of God. It's breathed out by God.

It's sufficient for all of the living of life, all of the testing of truth, so we can be fully equipped. And it's sufficient to help us with every good work.

[8:53] And some would say, well, you're worshipping a book. No, it's not about worshipping the book. It's recognising God's voice, that the Bible is assuredly God's voice, and it points us to Christ. So after the

resurrection, the Lord revealed how Christ was in all the Scriptures to the two disciples on Emmaus Road.

The Bible alone is our final authority. And when you think about how we got the Bible, we should treasure the Bible. We think how for centuries the Bibles were only in Latin for the most part, and ordinary people couldn't read the promises of God in their own language.

And then people like William Tyndale translated it into English. And he was martyred for simply doing that, for translating the Bible.

So we can have it in the English tongue, which is a forebearer of the King James Bible. And he said that his goal was that a boy who drives the plough would know more of the Scriptures than these religious people that were against him.

He wanted the common people to know the Word of God, to be able to read it, and have their own reading of it, not having to understand it in the foreign language of Latin.

[10:07] And when you think about how we got the Bible, we should really treasure it. We should really value it. People died so we can have the Bible in our language. We should treasure the Word of God. And the Scriptures that tell us to honour the Word of God, for example, Psalm 119, 105, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

It says of the Bereans that they search the Scriptures daily. A good test of anything is if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there's no light in them. So when you think something looks a bit murky, well, it's because they're not speaking according to the Bible.

It's got to be biblical. And the Bible, of course, it reveals salvation plainly. John 3, 16, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, believe in him. God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

So if we believe in Jesus, we save, but if not, we condemn. And then Romans 10, 17 says, faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. So faith comes by the Bible.

So we want to have the Bible very preeminent. So Scripture alone, we want to have Scripture as the, really the first principle of final authority, God's final word on anything.

[11:21] God's truth is biblical, it's the Bible. So the Bible alone. Then the next one, the second one, faith alone. How do we get saved?

We're justified by trusting Christ, not by works. And, of course, faith is not mere head knowledge. James 2 talks about the devils also believe and tremble. So it's not merely a mental ascent or an emotion thing, it's a personal trust.

It's saying, I trust that Jesus died for my sin. And I put my trust in him, I rest in him. And the notes there, it tells us, faith is the empty hand receiving grace.

It's not a work. As we'll unpack that one later, Romans 4, 5 talks about. And this truth humbles us, that it tells us that it's not by works of righteousness, it's not of works, lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2, 9.

And it gives us peace too, when we think it's about Christ and his work, it's about faith in Christ. And it gives us peace, that we're justified by faith.

[12:30] We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So it humbles us too, that it's faith alone, it's not about our works. Whereas it's still a very common mistake that people make.

They think they've got to work for it or deserve it or earn it as some credit, as some reward. But no, it's faith. It's simple trust. And some scriptures that talk about that, Romans 1, 17, that was what really helped turn the light bulb moment for Luther, that just shall live by faith.

That it's faith. And it's his righteousness imputed to us that justifies us. It's imputed. It's not our righteousness. It's we receive his righteousness by faith.

And Ephesians 2, 8 and 9, it says, For by grace he is saved through faith, not of works. Romans 4, 5, To him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness. And then that simple scripture, Acts 16, 31, So we see it's faith alone.

Faith alone. What is faith? It's simple trust in Christ's promise. If you believe that Jesus died and you trust him, then you are secure forever.

[13:43] You've received his gift. And he says unto us, And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. So once you do believe in Jesus, we have that

trust that saves.

Faith saves the instant you believe. So the moment you believe on Jesus as your saviour, he says that I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. We've got that assurance that we're safe and secure, because he's the one who does the saving.

And faith alone frees us from the faith plus works, performance-driven systems. There's still churches, and the Roman Catholic Church for one, they still teach faith plus works, that you have to perform, you have to do.

I like to put it that it's not about our doing, but about his done. You know, he says it is finished. Everything was done at Calvary. It's not about your doing, it's about your trusting that he has done. Everything to save you is faith. Faith alone. Not by performance, not by works. Next one, number three, by grace alone. Grace, it's his undeserved favour towards us.

[14:52] We don't deserve salvation. It's entirely of his mercy and his loving kindness. And really, every step of salvation comes from God's grace alone. It's the reason for our salvation.

Salvation, it's 100% God's free and undeserved favour. He draws us by his spirit, and then he glorifies us. All grace from go to woe, in drawing us and then ultimately in the glorifying of us and heaven, and we get a new body.

It's grace right through. And again, salvation is a gift, it's not a reward. We were dead in sin and enemies, yet God gave life freely. So, we can really grab that thought about the wonder of his grace.

We just sang about amazing grace. And you think, it's God's free gift, isn't it? It's grace alone. It's not that he was lenient to us.

We were guilty. We didn't deserve it. He granted us pardon. Again, grace cannot be mixed with works. It says there in Titus 2.11, For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

[16:02] He's offered it to all, but it's resisted by some. In Acts 7.51, Stephen said to the Jews, You do always resist the Holy Ghost. But by grace, through faith, we can be saved.

Ephesians 2.8, and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Another truth about grace is it crushes pride. Because it's not about you.

It's not about me. It's about him. And Jonah found that, as we know the story goes, as he was swallowed by the whale, the great fish. And he cried out from the belly of the fish, Salvation is of the Lord.

And then the next minute, he's let loose on the beach. The fish spurts him out onto the beach. And he says, Salvation is of the Lord. So it's not human pride. We can't claim any merit for our salvation. We don't deserve it. We never can deserve it. But it's all granted freely by his grace. And we're sealed eternally. It says you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

[17:08] And then we have the truth that will never be lost. Romans 8.38 says, Nothing shall separate us from his great love. And it's like the prodigal's welcome. The prodigal son, when he came home, the father lavished everything on him, gave him all that he didn't deserve.

You know, the ring on his finger, shoes on his feet, the best robe, and then the fatted calf. The prodigal son didn't deserve any of that. Really, he deserved, I suppose, looking at it as an outsider, you would think, well, what did he deserve?

Probably condemnation. He fouled up. He hurt the father. And he spent, he wasted what the father had given him. He really didn't deserve anything from the father.

And yet grace gave him everything. And the man who penned the song Amazing Grace, John Newton says, I am a great sinner. He is a great saviour.

He recognised the grace and gave all the glory to God. And anyone who believes can be saved. That's grace, isn't it? Whosoever. The next truth, number four, Christ alone.

[18:20] It's Christ and Christ only from start to finish. Think about salvation. It's only because of our Lord Jesus. It tells us that Christ alone reconciles man to God.

He's the only one who can save us. No prayers to Mary, no saint intercessions, no rituals can substitute. And Hebrews 10, 14 says, his sacrifice was once for all, by one offering.

By one offering. There's only one way to be saved and it's through our Lord Jesus, through his death on the cross and rising for our sin. We can trust him as our saviour. And we read other verses there. There's one God, one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. It says he gave himself a ransom for all and he paid in full. It was the finished work. That's the truth about the cross is it was finished. There's nothing more needs to be added. It's called the finished work. That everything was finished. And it was paid in full back then at Calvary's Hill.

[19:20] So your salvation was procured for you 2,000 years ago at the cross. He did everything to save you. It's Christ alone. And he says, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And then it reads, neither is there salvation in any others. Only one name whereby he can be saved. It's Jesus. And Christ is the God man. He's able to save because he's both infinite God and true man. He's the perfect God, perfect man, very God, very man. And he's able to save to the uttermost those who come unto him. And to believe in him is to have everlasting life. It says of the Gospel of John, John 20, 31. It says, these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.

Ridley and Latimer, they put the emphasis on Christ's cross alone, not the mass, but that Christ's cross is the way to be saved through faith in Christ.

[20:27] And then the last one, number five, kind of wraps it all up with the truth that really everything exists for God's glory. Think of a whole being, a whole purpose of being, a whole life.

It's really meant to be for his glory. And Isaiah 43, 7, it reads, I have created him for my glory. And no glory is shared with man, as we read before, Ephesians 2, 9.

It's not of works, lest any man should boast. Some people think salvation is about their works, or what they add to, believing. It's not of that. It's not of works, lest any man should boast.

We can't brag about any good works that we do as meriting more of heaven than the next man. It's all of his grace by faith. It's not of works.

And faith saves the instant that you believe. We see that there, glory to God alone. And a really pivotal scripture is that one, 1 Corinthians 10, 31.

[21:33] Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God. It's all encompassing of our life that we have that eye to what is to God's glory.

Romans 11, 36, it says, Of him and through him and to him are all things. It's all unto him, unto his praise. And then Psalm 115, 1 says, Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.

When you think about really our life and how we live and just the fact that we've got breath to breathe, he deserves all the glory. He deserves all the praise.

And grace ensures that God gets all the credit. Man gets none. And living for his glory brings joy, not fear. It says, 1 Corinthians 1, 31, Hear that glory hath led him glory in the Lord.

Give him glory. And Psalm 100, verse 5, it says, For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, his truth endureth to all generations. A practical truth we could think about is, can I live my whole life for the glory of God?

[22:42] And it's not like God's just got one compartment of your life, but your work, your hobbies, your relationships, that's all in the context of how can I glorify God?

How can I give him glory? Whether I eat or drink or whatsoever I do. Jonathan Edwards was a famous preacher of old time and he had a number of resolutions and one was resolved to live with all my might while I do live to the glory of God.

He wanted to make sure that's my emphasis, that I'm going to have that focus to all the dimensions of my life, to live it with all my might to the glory of God.

And it's interesting, Johann Sebastian Bach, the famous composer, he would sign his music on the bottom of his music which was SDG, Soli Dio Gloria.

In other words, glory to God alone. He wanted to give all the glory for all the beautiful music that he wrote that he said, it's not about me, it's not about me claiming credit, it's not glory to Johann Sebastian Bach, it's glory to God alone that's enabled me to write this music.

[23:56] He gave God praise. And in a way, humans are naturally glory stealers. We want credit for things. It's not one stealing the glory.

We're meant with it, it's not one giving the glory. Glory to God alone. You see there, the chart sums up really where we've covered tonight, puts it in a simple chart.

And just to go through that again, scripture alone, the Bible needs to be our ultimate guide, our ultimate rule, our only authority, especially for truth and salvation, that we measure everything by the plumb line of the word of God.

Does it measure up? Does it fit with scripture? Or is it contrary to scripture? Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. It gives us that wisdom that we need, the word of God, the Bible alone, faith alone, is our trust for salvation in Christ, in Christ alone, to know that Jesus saves and he saves instantly and eternally.

Once you've trusted him, you have salvation. It's a gift and he gives it by his grace. The next one, grace alone. It's God's free gift to all. You can't earn it.

[25:13] Simply receive it. Grace alone. Christ alone, there's only one saviour, one mediator between God and man, only one who can give us salvation.

There's salvation in no other name other than his name. And then, really, the summing up of all of life and of truth, really, is that all praise for salvation, for any good thing that we have, it belongs to God alone.

Let's not steal the glory. And that's about our whole life. It's our purpose. It's his glory. Whether we eat, drink, whatever we do, it's all encompassing, isn't it?

How can I live my life for the glory of God? And especially for my salvation, all the praise is his. He's done the saving. And you think about your purpose in life, can you live in a way that brings glory to God?

It should be a good defining statement for my life, shouldn't it? How can I live my life in a way that glorifies God? And when I decide things, is that going to glorify God or not glorify God?

[26:22] That should dictate really my choices, shouldn't it? And then you see in the last section there, making it personal. Making it personal. You could think about some questions, some applications.

When you try to put these five truths into practice, sola scriptura, scripture alone, have I got some belief that's based more on tradition or on my feelings than actually the clear teachings of the Bible? It's a good way to measure, especially when there's so many cults and false teachers out there.

Can I measure this, that actually that's what the Bible says and it doesn't conflict with the Bible, it's scripture alone.

This belief is not based on tradition or feeling, but on the clear teaching of scripture. And so when you get a situation, if someone gives you an opinion that doesn't match the Bible, the Bible wins. Scripture alone, that should be the final authority. And you see the second one, faith alone. When I'm feeling insecure about my salvation, what verse can I cling to that promises eternal life?

[27:32] You could go to that one, 1 John 5, 13, that if you believe on the name of the Son of God, you can know that you have eternal life. There's an assurance there that it's not about your feelings, it's not about your feeling of security or getting a warm and fuzzy feeling to know whether you're a Christian or not.

If you trusted Jesus as your saviour, you believed in Christ to die for your sins, to be your Lord, then as you've trusted him, you've received that gift. It's by faith.

And then it's by God's grace too, again. And you could think, well, of some blessings that I've received this week, I did not deserve them.

It's grace, isn't it? Maybe we should be more mindful that God's providence, the blessings of life, it's God's grace, isn't it, that we have anything and we can praise him for that.

Then the fourth one there, Christ alone. What problems am I trying to solve on my own that I need to bring to Christ alone? Sometimes we try to go it alone.

[28:37] We don't think to pray, to ask God to help us. We'd rather go to him. He's the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Christ alone. Have that emphasis, have that focus.

It's a good focus to have the focus of Christ alone, to think, what would Jesus want? My Lord. Will this bring glory to God? Do we stop to think that?

Is it going to bring glory to God or is it actually a bit of a conflict, a bit of a compromise? And when you think of the glory of God, God's glory alone, salvation, even our Christian life, and you admire the Mona Lisa on the wall, the masterpiece gets admired but really the artist gets all the praise, isn't it?

And it's the same with our Christian life, isn't it? And people might recognise you for this or that, that you're following Jesus and you're living godly and you might get admired and complimented for that but you're really just the masterpiece and it's the artist, it's the artist who gets all the praise and we want to give God all the glory, don't we?

So hopefully you can capture that. I know it's a bit of a short one tonight. Hopefully it's captured it in a simple way. It is very simple and it's just a handy summary of these core Bible truths, the gospel truths, the power of grace, the work of Christ and the fact that all is, all is unto him, isn't it?

[30:07] For the glory of God. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for these truths, simple yet profound that we can. Think of the wonder of salvation, of the wonder of grace, of faith, that claims your gift.

Lord, for the truth that it's all unto you, the praise, the glory. Lord, help us, we pray, to walk in your truth, to be...