

# Sola Fide/ Sola Gratia

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 15 January 2012

Preacher: Canon Dr. J.I. Packer

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Hello everybody, and first event of the year at Lotus Exchange. Are you ready, Harvey?  
One more minute. Okay. Just to, there's an event next week.  
Eric Thurston. Very strange title. Why this year will be your best ever spiritual, social, physical and financial health.  
That's called programming. That is called programming when a speaker or someone announces something, but they program you how to react or respond to it before this even started.  
So, he's already announced the success of his talk next week. So, you must come along and check it out and see what he has to say.
- [ 1 : 07 ]     This morning we have Jim Packer and how you're ever announced Jim Packer. But I was thinking about him the other day, and I thought, those of us that have read him probably realise his command of English, and the way he turns a phrase.  
And he has, dare I say, a common man in mind, to communicate with a common man. And the writing is page turning.  
And that type of writing, where you don't have to reach for a philosophical dictionary to see what a word means.  
Nothing like that is in the writing, that he seems to want to communicate with us. And I think that's very friendly. And most important for those of us that are still learning the basics and the essentials of essential things.  
And so, it's always a good read to read Jim Packer. And so, I recommend him actually. Recommend his book.
- [ 2 : 21 ]     And, but you need a really good lesson in English at its best. Go to Packer.  
And that's how I will I can really think to say and talk and introduce him this morning. So, the title is Sola Fide, Sola Gratia.  
And over to you, Dr. Packer. We are recording. Thank you so much, Bill, for your introduction.  
The word of a common man, if ever there was one. Bless you, Bill. And I hope that you won't want to eat any of your words when I finish my presentation today.  
I should make it clear to you, brothers and sisters, that I am speaking in order. Bill, who does all the booking, as you know, for Learners Exchange, said to me, somebody, somebody, I don't know who, somebody has asked that we focus on some of the phrases that come to us from the Reformation.
- [ 3 : 54 ]     And of those phrases, Sola Fide and Sola Gratia, as I shall say, because I was taught Latin as a boy, and in those days you pronounce the T hard rather than soft.  
Sola Fide and Sola Gratia are two of those phrases that come to us from the Reformation. And that certain people do toss around as, well, how do you say it, the way that you toss around rocks, sometimes, at any rate, hoping that they will hit somebody and make their mark, and leave you master of the field.

Well, alright, I accept the two phrases. I will try to explain them. I'm going to call them slogans, because that, really, in use, is what they are.

Two slogans out of the following set of five. Sola Scriptura, which means by Scripture alone. Sola Fide, which means by faith alone.

Sola Gratia means by grace alone. Sola Christo means by Christ alone. Sola Gratia means by grace alone.

[ 5 : 27 ] Sola Gratia means by grace alone. Sola Gratia means by grace alone. Sola Gratia means by grace alone. That's the fifth. That means glory to God alone. You can see it's a form of the Latin word solus that expresses the thought of aloneness each time round.

Well, okay. Focus with me then for a moment on the Reformation, where these phrases, at least in the usage to which we are accustomed, were born.

So, the Reformation, historically, was a dual aspect movement.

And it depends on where you're coming from, which aspect of the movement you're likely to stress. From one standpoint, it was a political movement.

In Britain, as you know, I'm sure, it was a matter of the monarch, Henry VIII, formally shaking off the authority of the Pope, declaring that the Bishop of Rome has no authority in England, neither in the state nor in the Church.

[ 6 : 57 ] From another standpoint, and this is as true of the English Reformation as of the Reformation anywhere else, it was a pastoral rather than a political movement.

It wasn't a gesture of independence in Rome. It was rather a rediscovery of the Gospel and of the excitement which the Gospel, according to the New Testament, ought to generate, and actually did generate in that 16th century situation.

And it's out of the thought and talk that expressed the Gospel that these five phrases came into, shall I say, standard use in the Church of England, in England, in the 16th century.

But you do have to be careful with slogans. That's the first substantive point that I want to make. Slogans are very dangerous.

They tend to stop you thinking rather than encourage you to think. They tend to be used, as I said before, as rocks or any other offensive weapon that you like to think of.

[ 8 : 30 ] One uses them in order to belabor other people, rather than to clarify anything for anybody at all.

Slogans tend to oversimplify issues so that, from many standpoints, they are to be avoided.

Because they seem to be clarifying issues, when in fact, very often, they're not doing that at all. But they do polarise.

Oh yes. And sometimes, the happiest thing in a discussion is not to polarise. But when people start throwing these slogans around, polarising is likely to be the result.

This makes me think of a clip, as I suppose I should call it, from, I think, a Bob Hope movie. Hope was in an argument with somebody.

[ 9 : 35 ] And his response to what that somebody has said is to jut out his chin and say, You know, those are fighting words, where I come from.

And his conversation partner sticks out his chin and says, Well, why aren't you fighting then? And Hope sort of shrinks and dithers, the way that he was very good at doing, and said, Well, I'm not where I come from.

These are fighting words, or at least historically they have been fighting words, these words of my title.

And I'm going to suggest to you that they shouldn't be. What I'm going to offer you, in fact, as someone whom perhaps you know already as a lover of sweet peas, is the following four headings under which I've arranged my material.

I shall offer you a personal approach to this discussion, a pastoral exposition of the two phrases, a polemical perspective regarding them, and finally a practical conclusion relating to them.

[ 11 : 04 ] And I don't think you could have four sweeter peas than that. Okay. Personal approach. Heading number one. I am an inheritor, same as you are.

I inherit the evangelical tradition of the West, and particularly of Anglicanism, and that evangelical tradition, as it has developed over the last 500 years, is essentially pastoral, rather than polemical, although persons in the tradition have often moved into polemics because they have judged, rightly or wrongly, that the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church stands in the way of the pastoral message that they're trying to communicate, the proper understanding of the Gospel, which they're seeking to share.

And so they have felt Roman Catholic beliefs have to be moved out of the way in order to make these things clear, hence the polemics.

That word polemics, as perhaps you know, perhaps you don't, but it comes from a Greek word, the word polymos, which means war. And polemical, as distinct from pastoral theology, is fighting theology.

Theology that is fighting what is believed to be an erroneous idea with a purpose of killing it dead. Well, in the evangelical tradition, it sometimes has been necessary to practice polemics.

[ 13 : 11 ] I don't question that necessity for a moment, because I do think that specifics in the Roman Catholic, standard Roman Catholic teaching, teaching, have confused the Gospel from time to time, and are in danger, still, of doing that.

But now, as an inheritor of the evangelical tradition, with its centrally pastoral concern, its concern, that is, to get people converted, knowing the Lord, to lead them into holiness and faithful service of the Lord, which is what the evangelical tradition centrally has been about from start to finish, as an inheritor of that tradition, I also inherit the New Testament.

Well, the whole Bible will come to that, but focus on the New Testament for the moment. I inherit the New Testament, and I defend the Christianity that I teach by reference to the New Testament.

I say, this is biblical Christianity. All right. What does that amount to? Fair question. I'll try to give a fair answer.

It amounts to the news, which runs through all 26 books of the New Testament, that God is working out a plan. You can look at the plan from two standpoints.

[ 14 : 53 ] just as in making a movie, you have more than one camera at work, and scenes are photographed by a number of cameras, and then by a process of cutting and splicing, you fit together the presentation of the scene using bits and pieces that the different cameras have recorded.

So it is in the New Testament where it's as if two cameras have been at work, and as you read the New Testament documents, Gospels, Epistles, Revelation, right at the end, as you read the books of the New Testament, you realize again and again you are switching from the viewpoint of the one camera to the viewpoint of the other.

From one standpoint, you are reading about a God-centered restoration movement which God is executing.

There's a cosmos out of shape, and he is renewing it. There's a community needing to be formed, and he is forming it.

there's a purpose, a goal, a goal of fellowship between himself and his creatures, which he is seeking to fulfill, and all of that is happening through the agency of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, and the Holy Spirit who comes at the will of the Father and the Son to apply divine power, divine redemptive power, to human lives.

[ 17 : 00 ] And that leads on to the viewpoint of, as it were, the second camera, the second perspective that you find in the New Testament, which is the perspective of a man-focused rescue movement, rescue mission, you might say, where the documents directly address people whom the New Testament calls sinners.

They are human beings whom God created who have gone wrong, and they are being addressed in order to be restored, to let God restore them, rescue them from the trouble that they're in, renew them as his creatures and servants, and in this perspective, well, the Lord Jesus Christ fills the horizon horizon, because he is center stage, and is highlighted as center stage in the whole operation, he fills the horizon, everything that brings any aspect of salvation to sinners is through him, and in him, and comes via him, and leads to a life that is hence forth lived directly to him, or for him, or as the

King James version said, unto him, he, as I say, is right at the center of things, start to finish. In the first presentation of the New Testament message, he is the agent of the Father.

rescue movement, and he is the one, first and foremost, to whom we relate, we sinners relate, in order to relate to the Father through him, in him, through him, via him, and in the life that we live as his servants.

And the New Testament, as I said, moves between these two perspectives, which of course belong together. They are perspectives on the same scene, or the same, what am I to call it, the same program that is being played out.

[ 19 : 57 ] I inherit all of that, and seek to grasp it, and teach it, and you, brothers and sisters, my fellow believers, you are in the same boat with me, I know.

You also inherit this double aspect version of God's plan of salvation, salvation, and you are with me in recognizing the centrality of the Lord Jesus Christ as the rescuer of us sinners.

And when I'm teaching this, I love to use the analogy of the drowning man, who can't swim, I can't swim, actually, and I once nearly did drown, so I'm able to speak with a certain amount of feeling about this, and I know what it feels like from the inside.

As I say, you're in the water, you can't swim, you can't save yourself, and you're very conscious that you can't save yourself. Someone dives in, brings you a life belt, gets hold of you, rescues you.

more and more, I love to use the word rescue as my lady for the work of salvation that the Father's agent, Jesus Christ, the Lord, our Saviour, is doing for us.

[ 21 : 38 ] And when I'm asked to present it, well, I use the four subheadings that I just referred to just now.

Everything comes to us through Jesus Christ. He is the mediator between God and man. Previously, because God is holy and we are not, there was hostility between the Father and ourselves.

We had sinned, and now we are guilty before God and we can only think of him as our judge. For retribution is a necessary expression of God's holiness, that's how the Bible presents the matter, and left to ourselves judgment, retribution, and banishment from God's presence is all that we have to look forward to.

think of the letter to the Romans, that's where Paul starts, if you recall, in the first two and a half chapters of the letter. But Jesus Christ is the mediator, he is the reconciler, he is our sin bearer, the penalty due to us was transferred to him, and now through him we are forgiven, our track record no longer needs to trouble us, we are restored to the Father's fellowship, we are forgiven, and so we enter into the blessing which Paul in Romans expresses in the phrase, justified by faith, Romans 5 verse 1, being justified by faith, we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that brings hope, and that brings strength, and that leads us into a new and glorious life altogether.

[ 24 : 02 ] Well, through Jesus Christ is one of the phrases, one of the dimensions of this reality, he is the mediator.

But then another preposition comes in to help us amplify the truth that we are trying to express, salvation, which is through Christ, is also in Christ, union between us sinners, who are dead in trespasses and sins, that's what Paul says, we are cut off from the life of God, and eternally will be, unless Christ breaks in and transforms things for us, well, Christians are in Christ, because he has broken into their lives, drawn out of them, faith in himself, and brought to them the atonement, the reconciliation, the new relationship with God, the new status, that by his cross he achieved for us.

And as in Romans 3-5, we hear of salvation through Christ, Christ. So, in Romans 6-8, we hear of salvation in Christ.

Paul expounds the theme of union with Christ, the same enthusiasm with which he expounded the work of Christ as mediator, in Romans 3, second half, and then 4 and 5.

and then I spoke of everything coming to us via Christ. He is the channel through which all blessings flow, just as he is the donor from whom all blessings come.

[ 26 : 17 ] And recognizing this and receiving him and his gifts as our savior is an exercise which the New Testament calls faith or believing into him.

That's a form of words which didn't exist in Greek before the New Testament was written. the phrase was coined in order to express a reality which simply hadn't been there until the Lord Jesus had come, died, risen, and made himself available to us all through the Holy Spirit.

But now that reality is there and we are called by the gospel to believe into Jesus Christ in union, to enter into union with him and to receive through him and from him all that is involved in spiritual life.

So through reconciliation comes the responsiveness of the gift of life to those who are united to Christ and that life finds expression in the exercise of faith which is a matter of receiving from Christ all the blessings of the new life that he brings or the new relationship that he brings and then henceforth the pattern of our life is to be living to him or unto him or for him as we say he is not only our crucified saviour he is our risen lord and we practice reverence for him and we show our reverence by service and so you've got Paul saying towards the end of Romans

Romans 14 and verse 17 the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit whoever thus serves Christ that word thus covers all that's just been said the practice of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit which is a matter of faith and obedience to the Savior whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men approved by men because this is a quality of life that expresses itself in neighbor love and people cannot but appreciate neighbor love when they're confronted by it and they are the neighbor who is being loved so

[ 29 : 37 ] Christ as I said is right at the center and my personal approach is the my personal approach to the slogans of the reformation and to everything else in theology is the approach of one who has seen this by the grace of God to think and who approaches every theological question in terms of this basic perspective I'm saying all this and saying it rather elaborately to make quite sure that you're leveling with me as I'm seeking to level with you this I think is the approach which all of us ought to have to all questions of theology and all questions of Christian discipleship not just the use that we make if we do of the phrases sola fide and sola gratia alright so my foundations are now laid and I proceed to the second thing that I have for you a pastoral exposition of these two phrases what we ask is the job that they're supposed to be doing what is the thought that they're supposed to be expressing what is the conviction that we are voicing and proclaiming as ours when we use these phrases well let me ask two questions to express these things first of all where did the phrases come from the first phrase sola fide by faith alone comes from

Luther Luther as I expect you know translated the Bible into German Luther was a tremendous chap from every standpoint in his own day he was thought of as a kind of spiritual giant and 500 years after that's what he still looks like to people like me at any rate and one of the things that he did took in stride was translating the whole Bible into German and he expressed his mind quite cheerfully as to what he was doing I want the Bible to talk German he said to talk ordinary straightforward German such as ordinary people in Germany you talk so he was willing to paraphrase a bit and use the vernacular a bit in order to produce a German version of the

Bible that would be properly understood and when he got to translating Romans chapter 3 verse 28 and doing so against the background of all the debates that he'd had with Catholic theologians during the previous years well he decided that in order to express Paul's full sense he needed to add the word only to his rendering verse 28 runs like this we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law and Luther rendered that phrase one is justified by faith only apart from works of the law and his purpose in adding the word only was to make it clear that when Paul says apart from works of the law he means what he says works of the law have nothing to do with it emphatic you see well that's where the phrase sola fide originated and it became one of the slogans of the reformation because everybody in the evangelical tradition wants at least if they know their own onions they want to make the same emphasis as Luther wanted to make at this point and as a good translator he discerned that Paul wanted to make at this point works have nothing to do with it salvation is by faith alone because it's through

Christ alone in the 39 articles article 11 focuses on the thought of Christ alone like this we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith and not for our own works or deserving that is actually a very mature statement of this doctrine because it highlights the fact that it's Christ alone through whom we have our new status with God forgiven accepted reconciled justified adopted into God's family we are accounted righteous before

God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith faith which lays hold of the blessing and not for our own works or deservings for scripture proof see Romans 3 28 which we were talking about a moment ago so there you have authentic Anglicanism following in Luther's footsteps clearly and explicitly the other phrase sola gratia by grace alone was frequently used by theologians in the Middle Ages long before the Reformation began it was used as a barrier excluding the thought that our effort has anything to do with our salvation if you go right back to the 5th century

[ 37 : 01 ] AD you find that a man named Augustine of whom you will have heard one of the great theologians of Christian history he was in constant controversy with people called Pelagians the Pelagian idea was that basically the gospel tells us how to save ourselves and it does so in the way in which the scout law tells us to shape our lives pull up your socks and then you'll find you can do it this is what you ought to do come on make the effort and you'll find you can well Augustine came out of his corner as a champion of the fallenness the sinfulness and so the inability of human beings to fulfill the

Pelagian agenda but Pelagius a monk a Brit actually I'm sorry to have to say that but it's true a British monk Pelagius reduced the gospel to the message of pull up your socks make the effort and you'll find you can so you save yourself with God's help what help does God give you well he teaches you the standard and tells you to pull your socks up that's the help of God well that's where the phrase sola gratia was first born and then all through the middle ages Christian theologians went on using it to express the thought that no it isn't it doesn't salvation isn't the fruit of any effort of our own on our own grace which means the love of God empowering us or enabling us grace is the source of our salvation and grace only so that in heaven we shall be patting ourselves on the back for having saved ourselves by taking advantage of the offer

God made us no we shall be praising God for the grace to which the whole reality of our salvation is due we shan't be taking any credit to ourselves whatever and there is something irreverent and ungodly about any other supposition about any other supposition well as I said that's where the thought of grace alone came from and it kept on being used in the middle ages and then in the days of the reformation John Calvin one of the leading reformers made a great deal of use of it because he was very strong on the fact that first to last salvation is God's gift to us in love and isn't in the least our achievement by ourselves okay now you know where the phrases came from and I've already shown you that in article 11 the

Anglican confession of faith gives you the thought of faith alone and in article 17 the Anglican confession gives you the thought of grace alone as the source of salvation does so like this article 17 heading is of predestination and election all right let's read the first let me read the first paragraph predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God whereby before the foundations of the world were laid he has constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ out of mankind and to bring them by Christ Christ at the center to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honor wherefore they which be imbued with so excellent benefit of

God be called according to God's purpose by his spirit working in due season that's using the word called the way that Paul uses it where the use that is whereby it covers everything involved in bringing us to faith not only causing us to hear the word of the gospel invitation but actually generating the response of faith in our hearts they be called according to God's purpose by his spirit working in due season they through grace obey the calling they be justified freely sins forgiven persons accepted they be made sons of God by adoption they become members of God's family they be made like the image of his only begotten son

[ 43 : 12 ] Jesus Christ we believers are progressively remade in the Saviour's moral image they walk religiously in good works and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity well you see what's being said there the work is God's work and it's God who takes us through every stage of it right from bringing us to faith through to everlasting felicity it is by grace alone well I don't know how much detail I need go into with regard to any of that article 11 I hope is clear to you evangelicals generally have no difficulty in embracing its teaching article 17 confronts some people who don't you think have not thought very deeply into the realities of salvation predestination does bother them but

I am going to assume that if I say to you are you in process of saving yourself or are you in process of being saved by Jesus Christ you will know the answer you are not in process of saving yourself you are in process as I also am in process of being saved by him and if our hearts are clear on that well I don't think we ought to have difficulty with the thought of predestination I suppose that for most people there's there's a moment of perplexity anyway at some point in their Christian pilgrimage where they're facing the question what then about people known to me people whom

I care for who at the moment are not believers what am I to think about them and the biblical answer to that I believe is you should think about them as people to pray for you remember the article spoke of God's counsel as secret to us it's not for us to know who God has chosen but it is for us to know that if we want to see God at work and specifically if we want to see God at work in other people's lives well what we should be doing is praying for them God has promised to work in answer to prayer and one learns to live with it so this is how the Anglican church bases itself on sola fide and sola gratia if one wants a scripture warrant for sola gratia well one doesn't have to look very far to find it still in the letter to the Romans you find

Paul saying this in Romans 8 28 through 30 surely are familiar verses to us we know says Paul that all things sorry I'm reading the ESV and I was misreading it I was reading it as if it were King James which it is we know that for those who love God all things work together for good that is for those who are called according to his purpose that phrase qualifies the earlier phrase those who love God those who love God are those who are called according to his purpose for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the first born among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified that conjunction of phrases shows that when

Paul says when Paul says that God called them he does mean God brought them to faith because the earlier part of the letter has been hammering away at the thought that God only justifies those who have faith alright those whom he predestined he also called that is he brought them to faith those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified glorified past tense but it hasn't happened yet answer no but in the plan of God it is fixed established certain it's going to happen nothing can stop it happening this is the promise of God this is the purpose of God this is what we have to look forward to glorification though future is as certain as our present justification through faith is certain well that's what Paul wrote and much of this is said again in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians and if you want to argue with

[ 49 : 35 ] Anglican article 17 we'll realize all that the article is doing is echoing what Paul said and it's really with Paul that you have your difficulty now I have offered you my pastoral exposition of sola fide and sola gratia what more is there for me to do well quickly I would like to offer you a polemical perspective on these two phrases which focuses for a moment the elements in Roman Catholic theology in the 16th century that the evangelicals reformers were seeking to clear a way in order to make room for the gospel as the New Testament expounds it Rome in those days was committed in the following three respects first note how

Rome expounded justification itself all Roman Catholic theologians of the 16th century maintained that Augustine was right on a matter on which in fact he was wrong namely to take the word justificare the Latin word for justify as covering not only the gift of a new status status of yes guilty as charged but not penally liable forgiven righteous in God's sight adopted into the family and an heir of glory but also so the Romans said justificare the verb signifies what we call sanctification that is the transforming of our moral nature into the likeness of the morally perfect character of Jesus our Lord



Augustine argued that and the sixteenth century catholic church followed Augustine and so he got how can I say it pretty tense about the in response to the evangelical insistence that justification is by faith alone without any contribution from our side the catholic view was that the sanctification aspect of justification was achieved by our effort using deploying the enabling grace of God which we receive through the sacraments and the council of

Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century that's the anti-reformation council which the catholic church held the council of Trent dismisses the thought of justification by faith alone as heresy well understand when Rome did that Rome was understanding justify in this big and unbiblical sense because the Greek word for justify it's dikio actually doesn't signify moral transformation that isn't part of its meaning at all it's simply a status word justification by faith means as I said a moment ago guilty as charged yes nothing can change that but forgiven accepted adopted brought into a positive relationship with

God as your God and guaranteed glory at the end of one's life well that's that's how Rome positioned itself in the 16th century with regard to the nature of justification and the evangelical response then and still is well the truth is that justification is simply a status word and it is by faith only just because it's through Christ only that we receive this new status sins forgiven and our persons accepted as article 11 says then again in the 16th century the Roman Catholic Church expanded personal merit in what theologians call a semi

[ 55 : 20 ] Pelagian way when the chips were down they did say they really did that we save ourselves with God's help the help of God is bestowed its power imparted to us like an inoculation really through the sacraments and then it's for us to use that power in obedience and the practice of good works then at the end of the day when the process of justification according to Augustine is completed and the final verdict is passed at the last judgment we shall be received into God's glory as those who first of all were redeemed by Christ on the cross and then practiced meritorious good works throughout their new life of faith in Christ until that life ended well the answer to that as you can see from what

I've said already is no all the merit that warrants our new status with God is Christ's merit Christ's cross sin bearing on our behalf we don't contribute anything to it except our need of it Christ achieved that new status for us by bearing our sins and so bearing them out of the way in terms of the account God takes on us and so as forgiven and restored sinners we are accepted by God through faith in Christ only and personal merit doesn't enter into the story in any degree at any point and then thirdly in the 16th century

Roman Catholics expanded the nature of grace as power tied to the sacraments the pre-reformation Roman Catholic Church well the Roman Catholic Church still lists seven sacraments alright so that's that's what they think but five of those sacraments so called are certainly not sacraments in the New Testament the New Testament knows only two sacraments both instituted by our Lord that's baptism and the Lord Supper but Rome believes that there are seven and Rome believes that believed then and actually when the chips are down official Roman doctrine still maintains this Rome and Rome believes that power power for righteousness for moral living for Christ like behavior and attitudes that power is tied to the sacraments so again the effect of the sacraments is like inoculation we receive baptism of the

Lord's supper and it's like receiving an inoculation or a blood transfusion or something like that the sacrament operates in each case as a channel through which the empowering reality of grace is infused into us and then it's for us to use that power in a life of righteousness worship glorifying God and the evangelical response is to say it isn't like that at all and I've already said that one side of Augustine's teaching the side which Rome historically has never made anything of was that the two sacraments that the

Lord instituted baptism and the Lord's supper they are visible words that is to say they are embodied promises you are confronted by the sacrament it is a right ritual embodying a promise which you and I are called to claim by faith sacraments are means of grace because sacraments are means to faith that so evangelicals believe is the way that it's presented to us in scripture and that is the way that in Christian life we are to think of baptism and the Lord's supper they stimulate us to faith as sure as I see and feel the water as sure as I see and taste the bread and the wine so sure is the promise of God which those rights signify and which

[ 61 : 26 ] I am called now to renew my trust in so sacraments should strengthen faith on a the Lord's supper in particular should strengthen faith on a regular basis speaking out of several years of conversation with Roman Catholic theologians I have discovered that essentially though Roman Catholic theologians have qualified and adjusted their statements they are still closer to the medieval position than they are to the evangelical position and if you have Roman Catholic friends with whom you talk about these things that I think is what you will find at shall I call it lay level and purgatory and indulgences and sacramentalism that is the idea that the sacraments just by being celebrated inoculate you with divine strength of one sort or another those positions are still maintained by Catholics so anyone who says that the doctrinal differences between evangelicals and Catholics are a thing of the past are overstated it isn't quite so not yet fourth heading practical conclusion time totally gone

I've had my 60 minutes I must stop practical conclusion in a sentence be Christ centered in all your thinking about your own Christian life in all your thinking and witness about other people's Christian lives in all your celebration and declaration of the gospel be Christ centered because after all when you get right down to it the New Testament itself is as I said right at the beginning and we should never have shifted from that point of view there are some people who think that the business of evangelical Christians and evangelical theologians in the world is to maintain orthodoxy as against heresy and doctrinal misstatement well that certainly is something that evangelical theologians find themselves obliged to do over and over again but what evangelical theologians who understand their calling are trying to do all the time is to stay

Christ centered and draw their conversation partners into a similar Christ centeredness for after all Paul does say in one place that God's goal is or God's program is that Christ is all and in all and that brothers and sisters is the real conclusion of the matter so thank you for listening God bless you now conversation comment reaction complaint you're all struck down is that good or does it feel could you help us what we have in our

English Bible is Paul's words work out your own salvation for it's God who works in you could you tell us what is the root meaning of the word salvation say in the Greek text salvation Greek word soteria means rescue and it's used in the New Testament for well in three tenses really there is the salvation that we've already received that's that is justification and adoption and our new status before the following there is salvation in the present you have Paul and no you have Luke somewhere in the Acts saying that the Lord added to the church such as were being saved salvation as a present process of being separated from the practice of sin and established in the practice of Christ like righteousness and neighbor love and then there is salvation in the future that's the usage that you have when

Paul says at the end of Romans 13 now is our salvation nearer than when we believed salvation and of course it's in Hebrews too Christ will appear to those who look for him having salvation so the word salvation can mean any of those three it can fit into with any of those three tenses now in Philippians 2 12 which is the verse you're asking me about salvation means the flow of thought shows that it must mean express that's work out express in practice the salvation you have already received in one sense and are already receiving in another that is the new life that was given to you as part of the well yes as part of the new status that you now have as adopted children of

[ 68 : 33 ] God that's the process of transforming you is your present salvation well work out your salvation with awe and reverence that's what fear and trembling in the King James meant there express your salvation with awe and reverence in other words seek to live it out because it's for it's God who works in you to make you will and do according to his good pleasure that's how the verse continues well am I making sense I am saved but my salvation isn't yet complete nonetheless what God has wrought in me is something that has made me different from what

I was before and I'm to express this in action right now Paul says work out your salvation with awe and reverence apropos of what he's just been saying about his confidence that they will obey his word in the letter the letter to the Philippians just as they always have obeyed his word and expressing your salvation is in fact done by obeying Paul's word and that's the flow of thought as you've always obeyed now even more obey what I say work out that is express for salvation with awe and reverence for it's

God who works in you to enable you to do that and that's what I want to see or that's what I want to be assured that you're actually doing this is for so that's what I think salvation means in Philippians 2.12 question am I making sense have you any supplementaries on that one just perhaps you're saying the original readers of the letter would have said work out your own rescue no they wouldn't because the original readers of the letter they're Philippian believers because of the context well they're Philippian believers and they've already been taught that salvation in the first sense comes to them the moment that they turn to Christ they the letter was written to people who knew that it's taken other writings of Paul into account but all

Paul's writings are addressed to people who've already professed faith they are insiders they're believers they're children of God and Paul is writing his letters in order to strengthen them and build them up and take them forward there isn't a single letter in Paul's corpus as they call it that's addressed to outsiders there isn't a letter in the New Testament that's addressed to outsiders I think it's important we remember that thank you yeah could you explain the seven sacraments that the Roman Catholics used and where they came from well they came they broke surface in the Middle Ages and the first place I think where they're listed is in the sententiae or sentences of Peter

Lombard which is a twelfth I think it's twelfth might be early thirteenth century systematic theology textbook which the monks used to write out for each other and I am going to read you what the Anglican articles say about them because I think it answers the question with a lot more authority than I can command in person there are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel that is to say baptism at the supper of the Lord those five commonly called sacraments that is to say confirmation penance sacramental confession that is where the priest pronounces forgiveness of personal sins confirmation penance orders that's ordination to the ministry matrimony and extreme unction they are not to be counted for sacraments of the gospel being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles and partly are states of life allowed in the scriptures but yet they have not like nature of sacraments with baptism and the

[ 74 : 18 ] Lord's supper for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God that is they are not of divine institution as means of grace through becoming means to faith like I said as sure as I see the visible sign so sure is the promise which it confirms they're not like that this is article 25 in the Anglican 39 goes on I don't know if you're interested but let me give you this just in case the sacraments were not ordained by Christ to be gazed upon or carried about but that we should duly use them and in such only as worthily receive the same that is receive the same in faith in such as only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation that's the

Anglican witness concerning the two real sacraments and the five what does one call them I call them spurious ones because they shouldn't be called sacraments they aren't sacraments I should tell you that in the Roman Catholic Church and amongst high Anglicans nowadays these five rites are called the sacramentals which is a compromise keeping a form of the word sacrament to describe them while accepting the point that they aren't on the same footing as baptism and the Lord's son but I don't use the word sacramentals like that I don't think that anything is gained by making it sound as if they're not very far from being like baptism and the Lord son they're really quite different okay yeah thank you for what you said here today

I agree with all about but in the Anglican liturgy sometimes I was even looking at it here today there's a lot of Lord have mercy O Lamb of God that take us away the sin of the world have mercy upon us it seems to be asking pleading for mercy and in other churches that I've attended the emphasis is more on he has already had mercy he's already saved us he's already we're already it's a done deal we're thanking him for what he has done in the past in this liturgy sometimes it seems like we're asking him to save us now as opposed to thanking him for already saving us well don't you think there's room for both I mean one of the problems about problems yes I think that's the word one of the problems about a liturgy is that it's supposed to speak to the spiritual condition of all comers all the folk who are in the service using it and that means that liturgies are composed or has been composed in a very comprehensive way and not everything that the liturgy expresses speaks immediately to the needs of every single person who's in the service as part of the congregation it's similar actually with hymns hymns that have choruses often the hymns express a quite specific personal condition spiritual condition thought that's why

We sing it all together. And in a broad sense, we know that it's covering the spiritual condition of us in a general way.

I mean, all of us need more love to Christ. Even if chief complaint doesn't actually fit what some of us have been doing prior to coming into the service.

[ 79 : 30 ] If you're going to have hymns that you all sing together, and if you're going to have a liturgy that you all pray together, there's not to be this, what do I call it, this elbow room of expression.

So that everybody will be covered as much as everybody can be covered. I want to consider how different people are when they come to the service.

Everybody can be covered to some degree in some way. That's the ideal, both with hymns and with set prayers.

Does that help? By the way, let me just say, if you abandon the liturgy and have extempore prayer, you have just the same problem, or often it's more acute.

I have a question that's been bothering me for quite a while. That you can be a member of a highly evangelical church, like St. John's, and yet in the confession of sin, there's no assurance of salvation.

[ 80 : 40 ] People don't seem to be able to confess an assurance of their salvation. Is there anything, I mean, we've heard the good news this morning through your talk, clearly good news, and yet it's still not in the confession of some that they are assured of their salvation.

Although they believe, it seems. They believe, but the assurance is not there. Well, I'm not sure how best to respond to this one, Bill, because you can guarantee that in just about any congregation, there will be some people for whom a forthright expression of assurance would be going further than they've gone.

And there is, I would have thought, a great deal of confidence in the prayers for grace to help Christians move along, that the prayers that you have, both in the regular liturgy and in the collets, you know, different prayer for each week, and I have been in churches where I found the exuberance being expressed about the reality of our salvation somewhat disturbing, because it seems to me to go over the top so easily.

I mean, to express the mood of, here's to us and who's like us, we're wonderful people. Thank you, Lord, that we're such wonderful people. I mean, it's true that the prayer book doesn't go over the top, and what you're saying really is that you wish it came a bit nearer to the top than you've noticed.

Well, I wish, actually, that we did more in St. John's with the prayer book Canticles, you know, the bits of scripture that are set for regular singing and service, and plus the tedium, which is a hymn from the early church.

[ 83 : 31 ] A lot of the assurance of the saints is expressed in those canticles, and we do very little with them. So that at St. John's, it may be, this is more of a defect than it really should be.

Of course, St. John's has its own style, and to raise the question of whether the style ought to be adjusted is to raise a very large question, which would involve a lot of debating and discussing, and would take months, if not years, to settle, and might still bring us out of the wood with less internal unity than we have at present.

So it's a can of worms that I'm not going to open. But at the same time, I would point out that we don't use all that the prayer book tells us to use, and those canticles do express confidence and assurance very four-threatly.

So let's leave it there. Now, you walked up to the front in order to close the meeting, didn't you? Running a little bit out of time. Yes, I'm sorry. It was a great subject, and thank you so much for watching.

Thank you. Thank you, folks. I have one question for you.

[ 85 : 07 ] Yeah, sure. A good point. I do...