

Sola Deo Gloria

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This morning is our last Sunday in Reformation month. [I] want to focus our attention on “soli deo gloria,” which [means] “to God alone be the glory.” The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 4:9-11 says this:

Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

As we come to this last Sunday [of Reformation month], we have looked at the other four “solas” of the Reformation: that man is saved by grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone, which all comes from the Scriptures alone. Now [I] want to look at “soli deo gloria.”

As we have learned each Sunday [this month], Roman Catholicism slowly grew away from the Bible. It became a false, manmade religion, full of unbiblical, mystical practices, invented doctrines, and superstitions. As is always the case when false doctrine flourishes, so does ungodly behavior.

The Roman Catholic Church became a cesspool of sin. We've talked about some of it already. Men, greedy for power, wealth, and pleasure, bought and bribed their way to become the next pope, which was [at that time] one of the most powerful positions, if not the most powerful position, on earth. Popes, in order to fund their ambitions, invented doctrines for the sole purpose of extracting money and power from people. Purgatory made people fear and obey. Indulgences made them give.

In God's good providence, as Roman Catholicism reached the pinnacle of its corruption, God raised up a group of godly men in different places. All [of them] had the same burning passion and desire to see God's Word in the hands of the people in a language they could both read and understand. Men like John Wycliffe, John Huss, William Tyndale, and Martin Luther set about this task. [Of those men,] only Luther escaped [execution]. John Wycliffe did [as well], but [the Roman Catholic Church] later dug up his remains, burned them, and threw them in the river just to make sure he was all the way dead, I guess.

Once the Bible was in the hands of the common people, the Mother Church was exposed as poor, blind, and naked. The deception was over. Men began to read for themselves in the pages of Scripture that grace was God's unmerited, undeserved, unearned favor. They read from the Apostle Paul himself that if you added any works to grace, it would no longer be grace [see Romans 11:6]. They read that salvation was by God's grace alone [see Ephesians 2:8-9]. Not only did they read that salvation could not be earned because it was by grace, they also learned from the Bible that the only way a person could appropriate Christ and His saving merit was by faith and faith alone [see Galatians 2:16]. They even read that faith itself was the gift of God, not a result of works lest any man should boast [see Ephesians 2:9].

They also read that salvation was by Christ alone, who Himself is the one mediator between God and man [see 1 Timothy 2:5]. They [had been] taught that they needed to go to a priest so that they could have access to God and that [the] priest would help them go through Mary so that they could get to Christ. But when they read the Bible, they realized that there

was only one mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus. And so, they began to get a clue that salvation was by Christ and Christ alone. It was not [man] helping Christ or Christ helping [man], it was Christ alone, without [man].

They learned from the Bible itself that the Word of God alone was sufficient for all matters of “life and godliness” [2 Peter 1:3]. That the Scriptures alone were sufficient to tell us all we needed to live a life that was pleasing to God [see 2 Timothy 3:15]. It was not God’s Word *with* man’s word added, but God’s Word alone, which equips every Christian for every good work [see 2 Timothy 3:15-17]. Before, the Church was about men. It was about men gaining power, men having control, men feeding their lusts, men and their doctrines, men and their religion. It was as if God existed to serve and exalt man, rather than the other way around.

Yet the Scriptures revealed that men were to, as we read in 1 Peter 4, do all things that God might be glorified [see 4:11]. In 1 Corinthians 6:20, the Apostle Paul says we are to “glorify God in our bodies” [paraphrase]. Later, in 1 Corinthians 10:31, he says, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” We are saved by grace, the very grace God supplies. We are saved by faith, which He gives us. We are saved by His Son, that He sent to earth for us. The words of God tell us these things, and when people discovered this, it caused them to realize that there needed to be a reformation, a change. They read in Romans 8:29-30:

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

We’re not even in the picture, except passively as recipients of God and His grace. Since God is the one who came to seek and save the sinner through Christ [see Luke 19:10], and since the Holy Spirit is the one who opens men’s hearts so that they can receive the gospel [see Romans 5:5], and since

Christ is the one who is the gift of God who willingly gave His life on the cross for us [see John 3:16; 1 Peter 2:24], therefore everything about Christianity, everything

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