

# Rescuing the Gospel

## Luke 16:19-31

<sup>19</sup> “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

<sup>27</sup> “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and

the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

## **Introduction**

There is a Story that is told of Pope Paul when he died went to Heaven to open the doors of Heaven, after all he has the keys to heaven, but the door wouldn't open. He saw someone walking by and said, Hi, I'm the Pope and I have the keys to the door of Heaven, but for some reason I cant get it to work and the person said, well, I want you to know that 500 years ago a man by the name of Martin Luther came up here and changed the Locks.

One of the greatest Moves of God for the church to return to the truth of the Gospel happened 500 years ago on October 31 1517

That was the occasion that Martin Luther posted his 95 Thesis on the church Door of Wittenburg Germany

But to understand what led up to this we need a little history of what was happening in the Catholic Church and the Man Martin Luther

It seems when you look at the earlier years of Martin Luther, He was destined to go thru a person Crisis every 5 years

It was in 1505 that he was coming home for a visit from his studies a a law student that we was caught in a violent thunderstorm and a bolt of lighting struck so close to him that

it nearly frightened him to death, and he was surprised that he had escaped with his life and he cried out in terror, “ Help me saint Anne I will become a monk”

Because of this brush with death, Luther made the impulsive decision to enter the monastery to take holy orders, This was in direct opposition to his Fathers wishes for a lucrative law career

However While in the Monastery, He was a monks monk He was the best at what a monk did. Wholly devoted way beyond what most monks were. But as much as he was committed to the duties of monkary, He was also beaten down and plagued with constant unresolved guilt feelings. He would would drive the Fathers crazy because he would spend hours in the confessional confessing his sins, sometimes up to 4 hours.

His training in law was transferred to a understanding of the Biblical Law. His Brilliant mind that understood the legality of his position before God often drove him to despair. He saw Christ as a Judge who only had wrath for the sinner.

On one occasion, he was asked if he loved God. He said “Love God...Sometimes I hate God.”

He couldn't find peace, He would go back to his room and remember a sin he did not confess and wonder if at any moment he would be consumed. He would go thru all types self denials self flagellation's to try to bring some since of relief from the agony of his unresolved guilt and lack of peace, But in 1510, Luther was appointed along with some of his other brothers in the monastery to represent there order in the holy city of Rome

Luther was ecstatic, because at that time the church had a high view of the sacrament of penance, this was considered the 2nd plank of Justification.

You see, in the Catholic church, at birth, you would receive the sacrament of Baptism as an infant and the grace of salvation was conferred on the soul until the time came that you committed a mortal sin, a serious sin. At that time you lost grace. So the Catholic church taught that the sacrament of penance you could again gain the grace of salvation. Hence the second plank of justification of those who had made ship wreck of their souls there were

4 things Penance included

1. Confession
2. Act of Contrition You declare you are sorry
3. Priestly absolution
4. Works of Satisfaction ( this is what stirred the Reformation)

this would give merit to the soul before God for Him to restore you back to a state of Grace

One of the greatest Works of Satisfaction was the granting of indulgences. These were given among other things for making a pilgrimage to a church with relics. (bones of Joseph, part of Cross,)

Churches and Cathedrals would compete with each other to see who could get the most significant relics.

The greatest pilgrimage was to go to Rome that offered the most indulgences. So when Luther knew he was going to Rome, he was filled with anticipation and excitement of spiritual encouragement. But he writes of his experience in Rome to be one of the most tragic and disillusional experiences he ever had

It was a time of unbridled corruption of the church and the priesthood, with priest running thru mass in a hurried manner and filling there lives with all types of licenscious living. Priest where openly engaged in homosexual behavior Luther being Naive, was crushed by all of this.

It was during this Trip in 1510 to Rome that Luther began to question whether all this was necessary and true.

and the whole matter of gaining indulgences.

These things began to bother in more and More as he studied and taught the Book of Romans in Wittenburg

One of the things that was a catalyst for the Reformation as something called Simone ( refers to the sin of Simon trying to buy the Holy Spirit from Peter in the book of Acts)

Some where selling offices of Bishops and other positions  
The church in Rome was in a severe financial crisis to finish building the Saint Peters Basilica of Rome

One one the guys that was assigned the task taking the news of selling of indulgences for the remission of sins was a man by the name of Tetzal (everytime a coin in the coffer rings a soul from purgatory springs)

he would go into the villages and say things like ...

*Don't you hear the voices of your dead parents and other relatives crying out, "Have mercy on us, for we suffer great punishment and pain. From this, you could release us with a few alms . . . We have created you, fed you, cared for you and left you our temporal goods. Why do you treat us so cruelly and leave us to suffer in the flames, when it takes only a little to save us?"* [Source: Die Reformation in Augenzeugen

Berichten, edited by Helmar Junghaus (Dusseldorf: Karl Rauch Verlag, 1967), 44.]“

some indulgences were sold for

1. Robbing a church	2.25
2. Burning a house	2.75
3. Killing a Man	1.75
4. Forgery or Lying	2.00
5. Ravish a Virgin	2.00
6. Striking a Priest	2.75
7. Robbery	3.00
8. Priest could have a mistress	2.25
9. Abortion	1.50
10. Murder parents or Wife	2.50
11. Abolished of all sin	12.00

Luther saw this as the scam of all scams

So it was on Oct 31 1517, Luther took is paper containing the 95 thesis, some tacks and a hammer and tailed them on the door of the church. This was a common practice, when questions arose and the need for debate was offered. It was customary to use the church door and the University Bulletin Board. Luther wrote the Thesis in Latin, thereby indicating that his was not for the common people but for the scholars, Luther was not interested in making this all public. If fact it was some students of his that took that paper with out his permission and took it to the newly invented Guttenburg Press and ran off 1000s of copies that they had translated into German and within 2 weeks all of Germany had in hand the 95 thesis

Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.

- I. **Sola Scriptura: Our Only Manuel**
- II. **Solus Christus: Our Only Method**
- III. **Sola Gratia: Our Only Method**
- IV. **Sola Fide: Our Only Means**
- V. **Soli Deo Gloria: Our Only Motivation**

Martin Luther said that justification is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls...if this is true, then what is happening today? We are in dangerous times when you are hard pressed to find not only a church member but also a pastor who can articulate the biblical doctrine of justification.

Do we need another reformation?

The first reformation happened due to the obscurity and perversion of the biblical doctrine of justification by the Church of Rome. As a result few were able to know and experience the saving peace with God that comes through full dependence in the Lord Jesus Christ. So too today there are countless who do not live in cognizant recognition and appreciation of this doctrine.

### The 5 *Solas* of the Reformation

In the process he brought about an entire revolution of church life, practice, and doctrine. Many of the doctrines that we Protestants take for granted find their crystallized expression in the thought of the Reformers. Theologians speak of the *Solas*, from the Latin word *sola*, meaning “alone.” Usually we list five *Solas*:

1. ***Sola Scriptura***, meaning “Scripture alone”: The Bible is the sole and final authority in all matters of life and godliness. The church looks to the Bible as its ultimate authority.

2. ***Sola Gratia***, meaning “grace alone,”

3. ***Sola Fide***, meaning “faith alone”: Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. It is not by works; we come to Christ empty-handed. This is the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, the cornerstone of the Reformation.

4. ***Solus Christus***, meaning “Christ alone”: There is no other mediator between God and sinful humanity than Christ. He alone, based on his work on the cross, grants access to the Father.

5. ***Soli Deo Gloria***, meaning “the glory of God alone”: All of life can be lived for the glory of God; everything we do can and should be done for his glory. The Reformers called this



the doctrine of *vocation*, viewing our work and all the roles we play in life as a calling.

These doctrines form the bedrock of all that we believe, and the Reformers gave these doctrines their finest expression. In addition to the doctrines we routinely believe, the Reformers also laid out for us many of the practices of the church that we take for granted. The church had lost sight of the sermon, celebrating the Mass instead. The Reformers returned the sermon to the church service. In the case of the Puritans in England, they returned it with a vengeance.

### **Nothing Has Changed Since Trent**

In response to the Reformers' relentless assault, Rome formed its own Counter-Reformation, hoping to regain the authoritative ground it had lost. One key facet of their response was the Council of Trent, convened by Pope Paul III from 1545 to 1563. Trent was an opportunity for Rome to clarify and codify its dogma, specifically regarding salvation and other doctrines that were under fire from the Reformers. In that regard, Trent stands as one of the most influential and important councils in the history of the Catholic Church.

In short, the Council of Trent pronounced damnation on every major aspect of soteriology that the Reformers taught. In particular, it denies justification by faith alone.

If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema. (Canon IX)

*Anathema*, according to Catholic theology, means the excommunication and exclusion of a sinner from the members of the faithful. Roman Catholic theology therefore pronounces a curse of excommunication and damnation on anyone who preaches or believes that you are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus.

## I. **Sola Scriptura: The Formal Cause of the Reformation** **The Cambridge Declaration (1996)**

Dr. Michael S. Horton, Dr. R. C. Sproul, Dr. James. M. Boice

### **Sola Scriptura: The Erosion of Authority**

Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided, far too often, by the culture. Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world often have far more to say about what the church wants, how it functions and what it offers, than does the Word of God. Pastors have neglected their rightful oversight of worship, including the doctrinal content of the music. As biblical authority has been abandoned in practice, as its truths have faded from Christian consciousness, and as its doctrines have lost their saliency, the church has been increasingly emptied of its integrity, moral authority and direction.

Rather than adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers, we must proclaim the law as the only measure of true righteousness and the gospel as the only announcement of saving truth. Biblical truth is indispensable to the church's understanding, nurture and discipline.

Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the seductive images, cliché's, promises. and priorities of mass culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preachers opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given. The work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth.

### **John Calvin**

“Since no daily responses are given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only record in which God has been pleased to consign His truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they ought to possess with the faithful is not recognized unless they are believed to have come from heaven as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them.”

But the true power behind the Reformation did not flow from any one man or group of men. To be sure, the Reformers took bold stands and offered themselves as sacrifices for the cause of the gospel. But, even so, the sweeping triumph of sixteenth-century revival cannot ultimately be credited to either their incredible acts of valor or their brilliant works of

scholarship. No, the Reformation can only be explained by something far more profound: a force infinitely more potent than anything mere mortals can produce on their own.

Like any true revival, the Reformation was the inevitable and explosive consequence of the Word of God crashing like a massive tidal wave against the thin barricades of man-made tradition and hypocritical religion. As the common people of Europe gained access to the Scriptures in their own language, the Spirit of God used that timeless truth to convict their hearts and convert their souls. The result was utterly transformative, not only for the lives of individual sinners, but for the entire continent on which they resided.

The principle of *sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone) was the Reformers' way of acknowledging that the unstoppable power behind the explosive advance of religious reform was the Spirit-empowered Word of God.

For the reformers, *sola Scriptura* meant that the Bible was the only divinely revealed Word and therefore the believer's true authority for sound doctrine and righteous living. They understood the Word of God to be powerful, life-altering, and wholly sufficient "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

Matthew 5:17–18 (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one

jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

A jot is the tenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest. It was written above the line and looks to us rather like an apostrophe:



*Jot* is related to our modern English word *iota*, meaning “a very small amount.” The Hebrew spelling is *yod* or *yodh*. Many Bibles have a picture of a yod in Psalm 119. Check out the section title coming just before verse 73.

A tittle is even smaller than a jot. A tittle is a letter extension, a pen stroke that can differentiate one Hebrew letter from another. An example can be seen in the comparison between the Hebrew letters resh and dalet (or dalet):



The resh (on the left) is made with one smooth stroke. The dalet (on the right) is made with two strokes of the pen. The

letters are very similar to each other, but the distinguishing mark of the daleth is the small extension of the roof of the letter:



### Jude <sup>3</sup>

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

### II Tim 3:16

All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work

Martin Luther put it this way, “Whenever you hear anyone boast that he has something by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it has no basis in God’s Word, no matter what it may be, tell him that this is the work of the devil.” **[1]** And elsewhere, “Whatever does not have its origin in the Scriptures is surely from the devil himself.” **[2]**

### Psm 19:7-11

- The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple;  
8 The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the  
eyes;  
9 The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous  
altogether.  
10 More to be desired *are* *they* than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
*And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

**2 Peter 1:16-21**

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. <sup>17</sup> For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” <sup>18</sup> And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

<sup>19</sup> And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; <sup>20</sup> knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

**Psm 119:97**

Oh, how I love Your law!

It *is* my meditation all the day.

<sup>98</sup> You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies;

For they *are* ever with me.

<sup>99</sup> I have more understanding than all my teachers,  
For Your testimonies *are* my meditation.

<sup>100</sup> I understand more than the ancients,  
Because I keep Your precepts.

<sup>101</sup> I have restrained my feet from every evil way,  
That I may keep Your word.

<sup>102</sup> I have not departed from Your judgments,  
For You Yourself have taught me.

<sup>103</sup> How sweet are Your words to my taste,  
*Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

<sup>104</sup> Through Your precepts I get understanding;  
Therefore I hate every false way.

### Thesis One: Sola Scriptura

We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation.



The doctrine that the Bible alone is the ultimate authority was the "Formal Principle" of the Reformation. In 1521 at the historic interrogation of Luther at the Diet of Worms, he declared his conscience to be captive to the Word of God saying,

"Unless I am overcome with testimonies from Scripture or with evident reasons -- for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils, since they have often erred and contradicted one another -- I am overcome by the Scripture texts which I have adduced, and my conscience is bound by God's Word."

**Similarly, the Belgic Confession stated,** "We believe that [the] holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein...Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures nor ought we to consider custom or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God... Therefore, we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule" (VII).