

**What the Reformation Was all About: *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Solo Christo, Sola Fide, Soli Deo Gloria***  
(<http://tinyurl.com/8h3sgw5>)

**Introduction: the Reformation is not a celebration of heroes but a celebration of the gospel**

God impressed me yesterday very strongly that I was to scrap my sermon for today and go to something else. I want to talk about the Reformation. And when you think about the Reformation, you need to understand something. The Reformation is not about heroes. They were people like you and me. There are no heroes.

You know, I was struck, once again in the past couple of weeks. Sometimes people live too long. King Hezekiah lived too long. He asked that his life would be extended and the worst mistakes of his life were made after God gave him that extension. It resulted in the Babylonian captivity. Sometimes wisdom is learning when to shut up. And wisdom is sometimes learning when not to meet with people and not to take actions.

I was impressed with something. As I go to look at the Reformers, and I think of Martin Luther, I think of Martin Luther who either lived too long or drank too much and who got his nonsense written down. Thank God I have not had somebody reporting everything I have ever said, especially at a good meal. I have to confess not only have I laughed at dirty jokes, I have told a few. And I have to confess that not only have I laughed at ethnic jokes, I have told a few. I am not a perfect man. I am a frail man. I don't come preaching me. I come preaching Jesus.

Luther was in many ways a failure. At the end of his life he wrote some terrible thing about Jewish people (Martin Luther (1543), *Von den Jüden und iren Lügen* (On the Jews and Their Lies)). In the beginning it looked like he represented a great

departure. Now never forget this. Whatever bad stuff he said and did he was simply being a man of his times. He was not uniquely racist, culturalist, religionist in what he wrote. It is just that he ceased being distinctive from his culture. He, like Calvin, was a man of his times. And at times he conformed to the world around him. So you read some awful things that he said.

And then I was struck with Billy Graham. Billy Graham has been mightily used of God. He has written a book—he has always helped in what he has written—but he has written a book now near the end of his life that is an excellent book that I would encourage everyone to read as they near their final home (Billy Graham (2011) *Nearing Home: Life, Faith, and Finishing Well*). And yet Billy Graham was caught on tape saying some terrible things about the Jewish people with Richard Nixon. It is amazing, awful things, talking about the satanic Jews and talking about the Jews gathering around him.

“But they don’t know how I really feel,” he said. And it is on tape (James Warren (March 1, 2002), “Nixon, Graham anti-Semitism on tape: President, pastor recorded views in 1972 meeting,” *The Chicago Tribune*, p. 8). Can you imagine it? And, you know, the sad thing about that in Billy Graham is that when the tapes were finally released—they weren’t finally released for a long time—and when they were transcribed Billy Graham didn’t remember saying any of those things.

Wow. Terrible things, shocking things, virulently anti-Semitic things just like Richard Nixon. Nixon himself when he saw some of the transcripts of what he said couldn’t remember having said that. And I think about Jesus’ words that on the Day of Judgment men will give an account of every idle word they have spoken (Matthew 12:36).

Have you ever used the N word? I have. I grew up with the N word—the polite pronunciation of my mother and the impolite pronunciation of my father. It is cultural. But I hate that. I hate that that word ever comes into my mind. I am simply saying that we are all bankrupt when it comes to being perfect.

So the Reformation is not about perfect men. It isn't about perfect leaders anymore than today's heroes are perfect people or perfect leaders. We all say things that we don't even remember saying. And if we were to hear a recording of something we said 10 years ago, there is not a person here who wouldn't blush at some of those things.

What was the Reformation about? I think that we need to understand that the Reformation is about these sayings: *Sola Scriptura*, that means the Bible alone; *Sola Gratia*, that is Latin, and it means grace alone; *Solo Christo*, that means Christ alone; *Sola Fide*, that means faith alone; *Soli Deo Gloria*, to the glory of God alone.

### ***Sola Scriptura* and the Priesthood of the Believer**

I want to begin with an examination of *Sola Scriptura*. What does that mean? The Bible alone. Does it mean that reason has no place? No. Does it mean that tradition has no place? No. What it means is that reason and tradition must give way to Scripture. Reason helps us understand the Bible. Tradition helps us understand the Bible. I read a lot of books. I read commentaries and more importantly I read lexicons, that is a kind of dictionary for a particular language. The Bible is written in the Old Testament almost entirely in Hebrew with a couple of chapters in Aramaic. The New Testament is written in Greek. God chose to put it in Greek, not in Aramaic, but in Greek, because the thrust of the New Testament was to take the message of the gospel to the known world, and the known world at that time spoke

Greek. Everybody did who was anybody. If you wanted to make money, if you wanted to trade with other people, if you wanted to engage in commerce, you spoke Greek. Even the Romans, whose native tongue was Latin, spoke Greek.

So I benefit from tradition. I go and I look and I see how words have been used and that helps me understand the Bible. But this is the thing I want you to understand. Scripture alone has the last Word. Tradition, yes. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Tradition is good, unless it comes against Scripture. It is always to be tested by Scripture, but it helps us understand Scripture. And reason—that is so important. But don't let your sense of human fairness, your human sense of right and wrong, your human sense of injustice cause you to dismiss Scripture. That is a misuse of reason.

I want you to see these words of Jesus because they are very powerful words. I want you to look at Matthew 15:9, because this is the heart of *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone. Jesus says, “And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines [or teaching as teachings] the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9).

What is Jesus telling us there? Jesus is telling us there that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the authority in the life of the believer. Now that has implications. Turn with me, if you will, to Acts chapter 17 verse 10 and we are going to look at a lot of Bible verses today. And what is said here about the Jewish believers in Berea? We are told there in verse 10, “Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded [more noble] than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:10-11).

People who accept what preachers say will drink Kool-Aid and die. Never forget that. Don't let anyone be Lord of your conscience, but Christ alone, speaking through Scripture. People who believe the things that religious leaders say are going to bring destruction on themselves in this world and potentially in the world to come.

Why is it that the believers at Berea are more noble, more fair-minded? Because they were critics of sermons. They were not gullible. They didn't believe everything that they heard. They said to themselves, "Wait a minute. Does this line up with what we know Scripture says?"

Notice that. They were critical listeners. God wants you to be a critical listener. He wants you to listen critically. He wants you to read along and follow along. He wants you to turn in your Bibles. We are in the greatest time of deception in the United States that we have been in in the history of this country. I want to say that. It is my opinion that we are in the greatest time of deception in the United States that we have ever been in. It behooves Christian people to check things by Scripture and not simply because the person who says it is charming, gifted and convincing.

Notice the result of being a critical listener as over against a gullible listener. He says in verse 12, "Therefore..." What is the result of a therefore? The result of a therefore is they came to hearty faith. Real faith is critical faith. Real faith is a skeptical faith. May I say that? Real faith is a skeptical faith. Real faith says, "Wait a minute. That sounds nice. That sounds plausible. But what does the Book say?"

That is skeptical faith. Skeptical faith challenges the wall charts and the testimonies and everything else by one thing, the Bible alone, *Sola Scriptura*.

And what is a doctrine very much related to *Sola Scriptura*? It is the priesthood of the believer. We could look at Jude three which tells us about—if you are taking notes—“the faith that has been once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). But I want you to reflect with me on Peter’s words in 1 Peter chapter two for just a moment, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood...” (1 Peter 2:9)

What does that mean? He is writing to ordinary believers saying, “You are a priesthood.” I want you to understand something. I am a catholic priest. That is why I wear the collar. But when I take the collar off and wear a swimsuit, I am still a catholic priest. And I want you to understand something. I am talking to a gathering of catholic priests, men and women alike, children alike. Every one who trusts in Christ is part of the one holy, catholic, apostolic Church. That is the truth. If you trust in Christ, you are part of the Church. The word catholic simply means universal. It has many manifestations. In many places it is a Catholic church. In other places it is an Orthodox church. In another place it is a Lutheran church, a Methodist church, a Baptist church. The point is that all Baptists are catholics, as all Roman Catholics are part of the catholic church in the same way that all Baptists are, all Methodists, all Presbyterians, all Orthodox are. We believe in Jesus Christ.

Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is a catholic, lower case “c.” You are part of the Church, the universal Church. This is what the word catholic means. And you are a priest. Never get over it. You are a priest. What does that mean? The greatest calling in your life is to follow in the footsteps of Christ who exercised three offices when he was here on earth. He was a prophet, he was a priest, and he was a king. You are a priest. What does that mean?

You are the priest for your family. You pray. I am a priest for Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. And I joined with a group of other catholic priests last night, as we got down on our knees in the priestly work of interceding for these two men and their families and more importantly for our nation. Priests intercede. Priests stand in the gap.

As a daddy, your most important role is to be a priest to your family, to your wife, and to your children, to your grandchildren. And all of you are called to be priests. That is what Peter says here. You are also called to be a king. We will get to more of that in a moment. But your kingly office under Christ is to rule. You have authority. I want you to understand you have authority. I want you to understand that the great principle of the Reformation, *Sola Scriptura* and the priesthood of every believer, to be critical and to examine the Word for himself, knock kings off their thrones.

James I, when he was James VI of Scotland, understood it keenly when he turned to John Knox' son-in-law, Melville, Andrew Melville, and said, he said, "A Scottish presbytery and a monarchy agreeth as well as God and the devil (Samuel Rutherford (1644), "Author's Preface," *Lex, Rex*).

James VI who was the great proponent of the Divine Right of Kings understood that the Bible's doctrine regarding church government has within it the seeds of destruction of monarchy.

There was a Scottish minister named Samuel Rutherford, one of the four Scottish commissioners of the Westminster Assembly that met in the early seventeenth century who wrote a book entitled *Lex, Rex*. We are into Latin today. *Lex, Rex*, the law is king. Kings are under the law. That is why the English Parliament rightly executed James' son Charles I for treason because he was guilty of treason, because he sought to overthrow the will of the

English Parliament by getting foreign troops from France to come and help him out and rescue his bacon. And he was executed. He wasn't a martyr. He was a tyrant.

*Sic semper tyrannis*, thus always to tyrants.

That is a Reformation principle. I want you to understand that the seeds of what we enjoy in a modern democratic republic are found in the Reformation. And if there were no Reformation, if there were no sense of *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone, and there were no understanding that every man, every woman, and every child is a priest before God, not only with the right, but with the responsibility to read the Bible for himself and herself, there would never have been the country that you and I know today.

America did not come out of the southwest where tyrants came and enslaved people. The seeds of America—and I would encourage you to watch the film by Kirk Cameron, *Monumental* (*Monumental: In Search of America's National Treasures*) -- the seeds of the American republic were at Plymouth Rock and in the... what happened in the decades that followed with the great Puritan migration. Why? Because what it is saying is that you have intelligence. You have the Holy Spirit. You are a priest. You are a king. You are an authority. You are a prophet and can speak the Word of God. It is not just for preachers. It is not just for ministers. It is not just for people who have been educated.

Do you know the goal of the Reformation was that everyone would learn to read and write? Why? Why was the goal of the Reformation that everyone would learn to read and write? To read the Bible for yourself and to know when the preacher is out of line. To know when he is not lining up with Scripture—Scripture alone.



And I want to close this section with Matthew 23 before we get to point two, Matthew chapter 23. It is very important, because I want you to understand something that Jesus is saying here. And it is the very heart of what America is about. Because America was founded by people who understood these principles and were willing to die for them.

The genius and uniqueness and exceptionalism of America are found within these five solas of the Reformation.

Matthew chapter 23. Listen to what he says, verse eight, “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:8-12).

Do you understand that the principle of the Reformation is radical egalitarianism? What does that mean? It means that when you look a king in the eye, you are looking at your equal. When you look at minister in the eye, you are looking at your equal. That is what it means. It means a radical equality of all people. Do you understand that in our Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution what we have is a principle that doesn’t simply come out of Christianity, broadly understood, but comes out of the Reformation. You are all equal.

Whether you are dealing with a King Charles, if he is guilty of treason, giving the penalty for treason, which was beheading in those days, no one is your superior. And no one is your inferior, in terms of your personhood, in terms of your standing before God.

That doesn't mean that as you move through life, you don't have to deal with people in a different way, with leaders and followers, but I am talking about intimidation. I am talking about being intimidated by experts and authorities. Why was being a lawyer frowned on? Because people in early America understood that educated people could twist words so as to make things obtuse that needed to be simple. Why is it that in early America it was the ordinary ploughman, the ordinary farmer, whether rich or poor, ministers included, who wrote our laws because they wanted the laws to be simple? Not 5000 page tomes that no one understands. We will understand it. We will read it after it is passed. Someone who would say that should be impeached. That is utter incompetence. And it is the deadliest, vilest form of chicanery. Laws should be written so people understand them. And pulpit speech needs to be plain speech, so that people understand it, *Sola Scriptura*. No high muckety-muck.

Notice what he says there in those three verses. Why is it that you don't exalt preachers? He says, "You are all brethren." I am your equal. I am not over you. Oh, I am part of a group of people that help shepherd you, and the only title that I think is worthwhile is "Pastor." It comes from the Latin word that means shepherd. This does not remove all authority among people, but it removes tyranny. Shepherds have a responsibility to lay down their lives for sheep, to protect sheep. In that sense your shepherds rule, and they only rule in a collegial way, not with authority vested in one person. It is not "Lord and Master." "You are all brethren."

Don't call me "Reverend," please. For God's sake—for God's sake don't call me that, because the Bible says "Holy and reverend is his name" (Psalm 111:9). Please don't do that. I find it obscene. I would rather you use a four letter, crude onomatopoeic, Anglo Saxon physiological term. Call me that, before you call me "Reverend." I am serious. I despise it. Don't call me "Father" unless I am your biological daddy. And little kids, it is good for

you in school to call me “Mr. Bob” or “Dr. Bob” or “Pastor Bob” or whatever. And don’t call me “Brother” unless you called everybody brother. See, “Brother” is just a substitute for “Father” in some churches. Brother so and so as if he is something special. If you call everybody in the church “Brother” and “Sister” from the lowest, most uneducated and poorest to the highest, sure, I welcome the title. “You are all brethren.”

### ***Sola Gratia***

Now let’s look at *Sola Gratia*. *Sola Gratia*, Romans chapter 11, verse six. Why is *Sola Scriptura* so important? And why is it that I am going out of my way to emphasize it? For one fundamental reason. It is the foundation of everything else.

If the Bible is the Word of God, “the only rule of faith and life,” then it critiques everything else. What does *Sola Gratia* mean? It is given to us so plainly and simply. He says, Romans 11:6: “And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work” (Romans 11:6).

What is he saying? He is telling us what grace is. Grace means that you are right with God solely by his favor, and your performance has nothing to do with it absolutely, whatsoever. You can walk into his church today having committed first degree murder last night and walk out of here a saint in the eyes of God, assured of heaven. And if you have trouble with that, you don’t understand grace.

I want you to understand that a Reformed church, a church that stands for the principles of the Reformation, offers acceptance and grace to women who have killed their babies. We don’t condemn people who have had abortions: we press them to confess their sins to God and accept his forgiveness. We don’t condemn people who

have murdered other people in cold blood, first-degree murder, premeditated murder: we tell them to confess your sin to God and believe the gospel that Christ died for your sins. We don't condemn thieves: we tell the thief, "Confess your sin to God and believe the gospel." We don't condemn adulterers or homosexuals or fornicators: we tell them, "Confess your sin to God and believe the gospel."

A Reformed church is the most accepting church in the world. It is where homosexuals and transvestites and adulterers and prostitutes and dope dealers and murderers and thieves and even politicians are welcome. Everybody is welcome, you see, because the principle of the Reformation is, it is the great leveler. There is no high muckety-muck. We are all either right with God by grace alone, or we are not right with God at all. And that is what he tells us.

### *Solo Christo*

Moving on to *Solo Christo*, turn with me, if you will, and we are going to spend a few minutes here Romans chapter three. Romans chapter three is the clearest statement of these things, if you want one brief section of Scripture. He tells us that there is a righteousness from God, or of God, apart from the law, that is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets... "...even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference" (Romans 3:22).

There is no difference in you and Mother Theresa—Billy Graham. I realize I said something negative about him, so there is no difference between you and him. You have said nasty things about other races and cultures, too. Everybody has done it. Come on. Let's be honest. We have all told stories we shouldn't have told. There is no difference between you and Saint Augustine. There is no difference between you and the greatest

person in history. There is no difference between you and Saint Paul and Saint Peter. You need to understand it. It is what... there is no difference.

### *Sola Fide*

Grace, which is unmerited favor, grace, which is receiving something contrary to what you should get, is received by means of faith and by faith alone, *Sola Fide*, faith alone. And, you see, there is no difference here. It is to all who believe. Verse 23: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23-24).

That is for murderers and abortionists. That is for homosexuals and adulterers and fornicators and married people, too, who have never broken their marriage vows. It is for thieves and robbers and rapists and mass murderers. It is available to any and all who will confess their sins and cast themselves on God's mercy in Jesus Christ.

Being "justified freely," what does that mean? That means that you are declared not guilty, even though you deserve to be declared guilty. That is what it means. It means that God not only declares you not guilty, he declares you righteous, based solely on what Christ has done, *Solo Christo*.

We read further, verse 25: "...whom God set forth as a propitiation by his blood..." (Romans 3:25)

What does that ten-dollar word "propitiation" mean? It means somebody is mad at you, and they are mad with you rightly, because you have done wrongly. You have betrayed their trust. You have hurt them. You have wounded them. You have

been ungodly. You have been unfaithful. And a propitiation is an offering designed to remove their righteous wrath against you.

The Bible indicates that God is angry at sin. But the good news is that Jesus' death is not only an expiation to remove sin, but a propitiation to take away the wrath of God.

People say, "Well, I don't like to believe in an angry God."

Well, the whole Bible is about an angry God. Hell is about the anger of God. But the good news is you don't have to go to hell, because the death of Christ is both an expiation, to remove your sin, and a propitiation, to quench the anger of God. Look at what he says, verse 25, *Solo Christo*, Christ alone: "...whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25-26).

What is he saying? Why is *Solo Christo* so important? Saint Anselm put it this way. *Cur Deus Homo*. What does *Cur Deus Homo* mean? Does anyone want to venture a guess? It is Latin. Cur Does homo. It has nothing to do with sexual orientation or dogs that do not have a pedigree. *Cur Deus Homo*.

Does anyone know Latin at all? I took it. It was... *Cur Deus Homo*. Why God became man. Homo is Latin for man. Deus is God. Why God became man. Saint Anselm's point is this. God can't forgive your sins, did you know that? God can't forgive your sins because he is unfair. Sin demands that the penalty be paid. Sin incurs a debt or an obligation. That debt or obligation has to be paid. *Cur Deus Homo*, why God became man is that it took the sacrifice of a man since by name came death. Man had to pay the price. But it had to be a death of infinite worth. Therefore

God became man and took your sins and my sins on himself. And that is what Paul's point is in verse 26, "that he might be just and the justifier," he says, "of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Because Jesus paid it all, *Solo Christo*, therefore I look to the blood of Christ, I look to his death on the cross. I think of the words of John the Baptist who said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), and I am comforted the debt has been paid in full.

We could go on and on and on, but look at verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified [that is, declared righteous] by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28).

*Sola Fide*. And he goes right on down. And if you were to take time—and we won't now—to read Romans four you would see how he quotes David, and David, the murderer adulterer, David committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and then committed murder to cover it up. He is forgiven. And that is why he can say in Romans four, quoting David, and he can say in verses seven and eight: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin" (Romans 4:7-8).

As we think about *Sola Fide*, we come to that glorious ending of Romans chapter eight, and I would like us to turn there. The glorious ending of Romans chapter eight is understanding this. If you understand the gospel that it is by grace alone, *Sola Gratia*, that it is based on the work of Christ alone, *Solo Christo* and if you understand that it is received by means of faith alone, *Sola Fide*, then you understand something. Real faith will change you. If you have true faith, in the course of time, the Holy Spirit will begin to work a change in you. Faith is accompanied by work, but works are the fruit, not the root. The root is what Christ did for you. And you receive it by faith alone, *Sola Fide*. And if you understand

that, then you can join with me as we look here at our next to the past passage, Romans chapter eight, where he says this, and I am going to read it, starting in verse 28.

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:28-30).

And I want you to understand why people were willing to cross a stormy ocean with storms, not like Hurricane Sandy, to cross a stormy ocean to come to a new land, why they were willing to die and be crucified in the first century and be fed to dogs and lions and tigers in the arena, why they were willing to be tortured for their faith in the Spanish inquisition and other inquisitions to follow. Why? Because they were assured they were going to heaven.

Since assurance of salvation isn't based on my performance, but Christ's performance, and since I receive it by means of faith alone, then I have assurance. I know I am going to heaven, because it doesn't depend on me. It depends on Christ. And Christ alone, *Solo Christo*. And it is grace alone, *Sola Gratia*. And I receive it through faith alone, *Sola Fide*. And so he goes on, and listen to what he says. Verse 31: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31)

I mean, do you understand what he is saying? You know my desire, my passion, what I have pleaded with God as I sat down here or stood down here and sang. I took some time out not to sing and to pray. I said, “Lord, what I want for these people is not



simply that the light of the truth of the Reformation comes home to them, but that they become torchbearers of that truth.”

You see, Christians who grasp this share it with other people. What is wrong with America isn't going to be cured regardless of who is elected on November sixth. I am going to tell you something. This is a prophecy. Whoever is elected on November sixth will inaugurate a worse stage of judgment for America. That is a prophecy. I stand on it. Whoever is elected on November sixth is going to inaugurate another stage, a deeper stage, a harsher stage of judgment for this country. But if we will recapture the faith of the founders, if we will recapture the faith of those who stood up against tyrants, who looked kings in the eye and said, “Look. No. You are not over me. You cannot tell me what I must believe,” who will look priests and ministers and pastors in the eye and say, “No, I will examine and understand the Bible for myself,” and are willing to lose their own lives, “Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill. God's truth abideth still. His kingdom is forever” (Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is our God”). If we would recapture the faith of the founders and be torchbearers of the truth, we can turn this around.

Then unless we become torchbearers of the truth, we are going to continue to descend into the darkness. How is it that on this day coming up on October 31<sup>st</sup>, we celebrate the macabre and the gross, the filthy and the lewd, a drunken bacchanalia festival that embraces death, when October the 31<sup>st</sup> ought to be a day that we celebrate life and light and immortality because the gospel is true (2 Timothy 1:10), *Sola Gratia, Solo Christo, Sola Fide*.

Verse 32: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

What do you need? The provision for it is founded in the work of Christ, *Solo Christo*. And though governments may condemn and torture you, as they did your ancestors, verse 33: “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:33-39).

### ***Soli Deo Gloria***

Turn over two chapters, the end of chapter 11. *Soli Deo Gloria*. It is why we live. It is that men would not honor us with honorific highfaluting titles. It is not that men would write biographies of us that are full of flattery and whitewashed. It is that whatever we say or do would bring honor and glory to God.

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).

*Soli Deo Gloria*, the glory of God alone. There is no other purpose for life. Saint Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 10:31:

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

America is not lost. The greatest days of America can be ahead. But it isn't going to be found in the Republican or Democratic Party or the Libertarian Party or Green Party or Communist Party. It is going to be found in the party of Christ. It is going to be found, not in the ballot box, but on your knees beseeching God. It is going to be found, not by a yard sign, but by campaigning for Christ to your friends and neighbors. It is going to be captured, not because you believe the things I am telling you, but because you have caught the vision, and you determined to be a torchbearer of the truth as well. That is the hope of America. And without it, America will die. Our country will be destroyed. It will on the dung heap of history like other empires.

But you can make a difference. You can make a difference by becoming a humble witness for Christ, a torchbearer of the truth, to what? *Sola Scriptura*, the Bible alone, *Sola Gratia*, grace alone. *Solo Christo*, Christ alone, *Sola Fide*, faith alone, *Soli Deo Gloria*. There is nothing worth living for but the glory of God. And that is worth living for. And it is the only thing worth living for. God help us. Amen.

## **Prayer**

Lord God, I stand, Lord, like a physician in ICU, watching the heart beat slower and slower, watching the lungs rise and fall less frequently and hearing the rattle in the throat. I look at the almost corpse of America, a nation founded on the principles of the Reformation, the priesthood of the believer, interpreting Scripture, everyone for himself and herself, every man a king, every man a priest, every man a prophet over the sphere of his influence. And, Lord, a salvation that is based on grace alone, on the work of Christ alone, received by faith alone. And a challenge to live life

to its fullest in the most fulfilling mission in the world: to the glory of God alone. And I realize that what made us great can make us great again. Lord, grant that we may be torchbearers of the truth of Jesus Christ, and if somebody is here today who doesn't know for sure that he is bound for the Promised Land, that he would know, she would know, today, on the basis of these great truths of your amazing wonderful grace in Jesus Christ. Amen.