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## **To God Alone Be the Glory**

### **Selected Scriptures**

**Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher**

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**00:02**

**Well, today we are concluding our study of the five solas of the Reformation. We already said that the five solas were formulated in the 16th century by the reformers in response to the abuses and the errors of the Roman Catholic Church. If you remember, the Roman Catholic Church said it was grace plus merit, faith plus works, Christ plus other mediators, Scripture plus tradition, and God's glory.**

**00:32**

**plus Mary and saints. But the reformer says, no, it's none of these things. We're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to scripture alone, for the glory of God alone. And as I said just a moment ago today, we're looking at the last sola, sola deo gloria, which literally means to God alone, the glory.**

**01:02**

**The Roman Catholic Church was dedicated to Mary and gave her glory alongside of Christ. But little did the church realize that Isaiah 42, 8 says, I am the Lord, that is my name, I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images.**

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And they also forgot about Exodus 20 and verse 5, where God says He is a jealous God. Therefore they were to have no other gods, nor were they to make for themselves idols to worship and serve them. God does not share His glory with anyone, and He certainly doesn't share it with Mary or any other saint by which we are to worship. He alone is to be worshiped.

**01:56**

to be praised. The veneration of Mary and saints was excessive and it was idolatrous in the Roman Catholic Church and it had distracted from the sole focus of God's glory which was what solo Deo Gloria signified. But you know when you consider the other four solos that we've already looked at, that's the reason for the fifth.

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God is to be glorified because of who He is and because what He has done for sinners. We give Him glory because of His grace and faith that He has granted to us. We give Him glory because of Christ and the work of salvation.

**02:43**

So as we look at this last sola, we're going to see that it is the glue that holds the solas together. And it captures the Reformers' belief that the glory of God demands reform in every sphere of life. It says, 1 Corinthians 10:31 says,

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Now when we think back to the Protestant Reformation, we have to understand that there were many areas that were reformed. Some came sooner than others. Today I want to look at three areas that they focused attention on. And these came, some in the beginning, some took, as I said, some time to reform. But the first one I want to look at this morning is corporate worship. In John 424,

**03:40**

When Jesus is speaking to the Samaritan woman and they're talking about the subject of worship, Jesus tells her what God expects from all those who worship Him. It says in John 4 24, God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth. Now, they may have worship with all kinds of enthusiasm, and Catholics may do that today. But the element that they're missing is truth.

**04:09**

They have to worship Him in truth. If you don't worship Him according as it's prescribed in Scripture, if you don't worship Him according to as He is revealed in Scripture, then your worship is idolatrous. You're worshipping another God. You're worshipping a God of your own making.

**04:29**

As I said, we are to worship God, but we have to do it in the manner in which He prescribes. And that was important to the Reformers, so they made several significant reforms to their corporate worship so that this could happen. And let me just talk about some of these reforms that they made to their corporate worship. First, they began to remove any reference to the Mass as being a sacrifice. When you hear the word Mass, or you hear the word Eucharist,

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**They're basically referring to the same thing in the Roman Catholic Church. In our language we would be talking about the Lord's Supper. Now like this morning we're going to be sharing in the Lord's Supper, but if you were in a Roman Catholic Church it would be called a Mass or the Eucharist. And one of the key theological points of contention that was between Luther and the Roman Catholic Church was the understanding of the Eucharist or the Mass or the Lord's Supper. The Roman Catholic view is**

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**the opposite of what the Protestant view is. The Protestant view is it's a memorial, but the Catholic view, they called it transubstantiation, and transubstantiation literally means a change of substance. They teach that a miracle takes place in the mass, or at the Eucharist, where the elements of the bread and the wine are actually changed into the literal body and blood of Jesus.**

**05:59**

**Now we don't believe that. We never have believed that. Protestants don't believe that. Again, we believe it's a memorial. Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me, and that's exactly what we do every time we share in the Lord's table.**

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**Listen to the Creed of Pope Pius IV in talking about the Eucharist or the Mass. He says, and I quote, I profess that in the Mass is offered to God a true, proper, and**

**06:37**

**There is truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that there is a conversion of the whole substance of the wine into the blood. As I said, this is what they believed and this is what they still believe. They have not differed on their understanding of the Lord's Supper.**

**07:04**

**So again, Luther stopped referring to the mass or the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and so instead he focused in on the memorial, he focused in on the grace, he focused in on the communal aspects of it. So that was one of the first areas that experienced reform. A second area of reform came with the removal of relics and paintings and decorations and ornaments.**

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**that were in the church buildings. You know, in 1 John 521, the last verse of that epistle written by the Apostle John says this, little children, guard yourselves from idols. And that's what these relics and paintings and decorations and the ornaments, that's what they were. They were idols.**

**08:00**

**Zwingli, who was a Swiss theologian and the leader of the Swiss Reformation during the early part of the 16th century, he advocated for**

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changes to the way the churches were adorned. And so what he did, he believed in removing those religious practices and symbols because they were inconsistent with Scripture. So there were two ways in which he did this. First, he did it with like-minded believers.

**08:26**

that believed the same thing and understood Scripture because, you know, by this time the Scripture was put into the language of the people and they could read it for themselves now. They weren't just told by the clergy what it said. Second thing they did is they started working with city authorities. Now that's significant because the church controlled everything, even the government. So the city authorities were happy to work with him in order for them to get the authority and the power that they felt that they needed.

**08:55**

So there were actually five ways that he and his followers removed all of these relics and paintings and decorations, all these ornaments. And so first it was through a practice known as a conoclasm. And what that means is it's a deliberate destruction. They started destroying these idols. Some of them were just removed, but many of them were actually destroyed.

**09:25**

visual representations that were idolatrous. The second way that they did this was through educational reform. Zwingli promoted education and the study of the Bible. He encouraged the reading and the interpretation of scripture emphasizing personal engagement with the text rather than

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relying on visual aids and relics. A third way that he did this was through public debate and sermons. So

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He would engage in these public debates. He would engage in preaching the Word of God. He would teach the people that these relics were nothing more than superstitious displays. They were nothing more than idols.

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And so the people began to respond. A fourth way that he reformed was through collaboration with authorities. He had the support of the local authorities in Zurich. The city council and even other influential figures had shared his desire to reform. And they worked together to implement these changes. And then, of course, the last way they reform was through a gradual process. And that's usually how many things do happen. Many things do change.

**10:39**

If you've been stuck in that rut for such a long time, sometimes gradually moving out of that is how you move this big old boat. I remember a single adults pastor telling me years ago, I was about 20 years old, knew in Christ, and I was just seeing some things and wondering how come the church didn't do some of the obvious things in scripture, and he said, you know what, Steve, you know it takes a mile to turn a big ship around?

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And he was trying to tell me this big ship that we're in, the church, it was a big church, 3,000 people, he said it's gonna take a mile to turn it around. It's gonna take some time. It's gonna take a gradual process for that to happen. But of course my question was, is there any process leading to that?

**11:24**

So it did take time for these things to happen. It took time to involve the community and support of that. So not only did they remove referring to the Mass as a sacrifice and remove relics and paintings and decorations and ornaments from church buildings because they did not bring glory to God, but they also had removed any extra biblical ceremonies.

**11:53**

any ritual ceremonies. Another reformer by the name of Martin Booster, who was also prominent during that time, he focused on simplifying religious practices. He focused on emphasizing scriptural authority. That's what we've talked about in the beginning. When we talk about scriptural authority, we're talking about sola scriptura. So he laid great emphasis on that.

**12:20**

And so not only did he emphasize it, but he taught that way. He was committed to expository preaching, explaining the Scriptures so the people could understand. Again, remember, the Bible hadn't been in the language of the people, and now they have it in their language, but now they needed it explained. There was much of it that needed to be explained, so it was explained through expository preaching, through education, through training.



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through dialogues, through disputations, and also through example and influence. Not only just teaching it, not only just explaining it, but also living it. Because again, if you remember, much of the clergy didn't even understand what they were reading, even though they could understand Latin. And many of the clergy did not live what they were seeking to understand in the Bible.

**13:19**

of reforms. He also worked on liturgical reforms. He emphasized over and over and over biblical principles over traditional ceremonies. Well, next, when we talk about the corporate worship, the third thing that they did in reforming it was involving the congregation. You know this morning as we sang, one of the first things that I did is I told you the page number in the hymnal.

**13:47**

We also have the words up on the screen behind me. I told these things to you so you could do what? You could involve yourself. You could sing too. You know what, during that time, they didn't do any of that. They were just spectators. They would just sit there and listen. And of course, that was a problem. But again, when the language changed, they now had the Bible in their language, the language of the common people.

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They now begin to understand what was going on, and they began to sing, which was something that they hadn't done. Everything was an

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instrumental performance. There was nothing sang. And so, by this time, as they're doing this, they're beginning to participate. You know, Martin Luther was a real big influence in the area of congregational singing.

**14:45**

It is estimated, and we don't know exact number, but it's estimated he wrote at least 37 hymns. And one of them you know very well, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, right? But he wanted the church to sing and to sing praise to God, solo Deo Gloria, to glorify God through singing. And so he was very responsible for that. In fact,

**15:13**

One historian, Roland Bainton, said that Martin Luther should be considered the father of congregational singing because of the emphasis that he placed upon it. He understood Psalm 104 verse 33, which says, I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. You know, beloved, whether you do that at home, you do that in your shower, you do that in your...

**15:40**

place when you're reading the Word, we are to sing unto the Lord. The Bible says to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. This is what we are to engage in. The cry of the Reformation for solo Deo Gloria clearly reformed this fear of corporate worship.

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And it's significant that it didn't just reform the theory of it, but it reformed the practice of it. If God alone was to be given all the glory, one did not just need to think differently, but they needed to act differently.

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So that was one of the areas of reform. That's one of the areas that they took Soledad O'Gloria into the church and they said, one of the things we're gonna change is the corporate worship. What we are doing when we are together. So beloved, when you look back and you look back in history on the Protestant Reformation, one of the things that you need to remember among many is that the reason why we are singing in the church is because of the Protestant Reformation.

**16:58**

The reason why we are not sitting here as spectators.

**17:03**

Confused most of the time because most people didn't speak Latin and Now we're hearing everything in our language You ought to thank the reformers for that who literally gave their lives so that we could have that experience a second area of reform came in church government This change certainly was much slower

**17:28**

It's just like today. It's a slow change when you're trying to help a church understand what the Bible says about church government. But even though Martin Luther had maintained an Episcopal system of church

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government, which had its authority vested in a hierarchy of bishops, he reinterpreted their function and their authority. He did this by rejecting them being the sole holders of apostolic succession.

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He focused on church autonomy. He focused on self-governance. And again, this is another thing that we can thank the Reformers for because that is one of the things that's big in the church is that we are self-governed, that we practice church autonomy, that all of our decisions are right here. They're not coming from outside sources. They're not coming from outside committees or organizations. They're coming right here.

**18:28**

And so that was one of the biggest changes that he worked on. He also introduced the election of church leaders. He organized assemblies and synods where the pastors and the lay leaders would gather together, and they would make decisions on matters of doctrine and discipline and administration. In fact, a most significant shift occurred in 1541, and that was when John Calvin published his ecclesiastical ordinances.

**18:58**

That was basically a set of regulations and guidelines for the organization and for the governance of the church in Geneva, Switzerland. But that began to spread to the other places and other churches. It called for things like educating qualified ministers. It called for the plurality of elders in the church. It called for church discipline and regular church services.

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It called for simplicity in church architecture and decorations. It called for congregational involvement. It called for catechisms and regular religious education and pastoral care and visitation.

**19:46**

This was heavily influenced by Martin Bouser's vision of the church, which actually later gave rise to the system that actually governs the Presbyterian church.

**20:00**

So they honored scripture. This was a return to the word of God. And I remind you that when Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses on the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, he wasn't nailing there a protest. He was trying to engage the leadership in academic discussion. He was trying to lead them in debate.

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He was trying to reform the church, and there was not everything that he was focused on, but there were some major issues that he was focused on, but again, the church wasn't interested in debating. All they were interested in is that you do it our way, or we will excommunicate you, and we will do everything we can to stop you, even if we kill you. Because that's how they dealt with people.

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If they didn't agree with him, they called him heretics and they burned him at the stake.

**21:07**

Now, from my study of this, as I pointed out last week, the only heresy that I see is not coming from the Reformers, it's coming from the Catholic Church. It's coming from what these five solars are counteracting, because again, it wasn't grace alone, it was grace plus. It wasn't faith alone, it was faith plus works. It wasn't Christ alone. It wasn't.

**21:33**

Scripture alone be in their authority of Scripture and tradition. It wasn't God be glorified alone, no, it was God being glorified plus Mary be glorified plus other saints being glorified.

**21:50**

You know, Scripture tells us that we are to pray to God. We're not to pray to each other. We're to pray with each other. We're not to pray to any Christian, any saint. And again, even today, Catholics do that.

**22:06**

But here we see that the church being reformed for the glory of God was coming back to what Scripture taught and what we have laid much emphasis on, that the church is the body of Christ and Jesus is the head of His church. Ephesians 1, 22 says, God has put all things in subjection under His feet, Christ's feet.

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**22:36**

**gave him that is Christ is head over all things to the church which is his body Christ body the fullness of him who feels all in all we are the body of Christ and Jesus Christ is the head of that body claustrians 118 it says that he that is Christ is also head of the body the church he's the head this is his church**

**23:05**

**Not our church, his.**

**23:10**

**So corporate worship, church government, a third thing that they focused in on reforming was family life. The priests were celibate. They couldn't marry. And almost as in a rebuke, Martin Luther marries a nun named Catherine von Bora. This was in 1525.**

**23:38**

**and then begins to have a family.**

**23:43**

**That was almost a rebuke, wasn't it, to the Catholic Church because that's something their priests didn't do. So in this case, theology came home with the Reformers, and they raised the honor and the dignity of marriage. Now you notice today that honor and dignity is being put through the mud again, right, by having same-sex marriage.**

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**24:11**

having people living together not married. The Bible has elevated marriage and it says it in the very first book of the Bible in the Old Testament right after God had created Adam and Eve. He says in Genesis 2 24, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall be one flesh.

**24:39**

Only two genders in the Bible, not all these genders that they've come up with today, only male and female. And them joining together, becoming one in marriage.

**24:55**

You don't have same-sex marriage in the Bible. In fact, what you do have when there are two of the same sexes together in a sexual relationship, the Bible calls that an abomination. In the Old Testament, you were put to death for that kind of behavior. Romans 1, you need to read that. It explains to us the downward spiral that occurs when any nation

**25:23**

and is given over to this kind of behavior, this kind of activity, God says that He gives it over to them. And that's what we're seeing today. We're seeing a sexual revolution in our country. And we're seeing all kinds of things that are being done, all kinds of parades and marches that are being done, and if you try to protest against that, you try to share Christ with them, you are the enemy.



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**25:50**

**You are the bad guy. You are the one that the police arrest. Not this lawless activity.**

**26:02**

**So since the Reformers believed in the Bible, sola scriptura, they believed what the Bible said about marriage. Over in Matthew 19, Jesus is saying here, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife?**

**26:32**

**and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh, what therefore God has joined together. Let no man separate.**

**26:45**

**So again, that directly challenged the perceived superiority of celibacy. It championed both marriage and family life.**

**27:00**

**But again, the church, that's not what they wanted.**

**27:08**

**In bringing family life into reform, they were also teaching about raising godly children. Genesis 1, 28, Adam and Eve were given the**

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responsibility, first of all, to be fruitful and multiply. In Deuteronomy 6, verses 6 through 9, Israel was given the responsibility to teach their children the commandments of God diligently.

### **27:38**

They were to talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, when you rise up, they were to bind them as a sign on their hand, they were to be frontals on their forehead, they were to write them on the doorpost of their house and on their gates.

### **27:56**

They were to be engaged in raising their children in the Word of God, with the Word of God, for the glory of God. You know, beloved, as long as your children are alive or grandchildren are alive, you are to preach the gospel to them regularly, constantly.

### **28:23**

Sol deo gloria. To God be the glory.

### **28:29**

That's what the Reformers were after. The shorter catechism asked this question, what is the chief end of man? And they answered it. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And so I believe that God is glorified when we commit ourselves to these five solas. Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide, Sola Christas, and Sola Dori.

### **28:59**

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**Deo Gloria. And I believe by the very fact that you're here today, that you give him glory. Because it's by your presence, you're showing your commitment to these Reformation principles. You're showing the commitment that church does matter. You know, during the COVID, they were trying to determine what was essential to stay open, and they deemed that church was not essential. And so they told the church, close your doors.**

**29:29**

**And many churches complied. In fact, in the beginning, just about all churches complied because they didn't know the gravity of what was going on.**

**29:39**

**But over time, they begin to understand that, hey, this is not anywhere near what they're telling us. And churches begin to open their doors. We did the same thing.**

**29:52**

**But there were consequences to closing the doors. Because there were people that could come back that didn't come back. And that's true not just here, that's true in other churches. It's almost as if to say that you get into this rut of getting used to not coming, that it makes it a little harder when you start to come.**

**30:17**

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I look at it in this way, Paul said this, that we need to beat our bodies and bring them in submission. You know, you do that in other things like if you still work a job where you got to go on Monday morning and clock in at 8 o'clock, what do you do? You don't feel like going to work on Monday morning, but you beat your body and you bring it into submission, you get out of the bed, you get you some breakfast, you get dressed, and you go to your job and you clock in. Whether you want to be there or not.

**30:45**

You've treated it as a priority, and it's sad to say that church is not a priority for a lot of people. And we're not the only church that struggles. There are a lot of churches that struggle. There are a lot of churches that have low attendance, just like we do.

**31:02**

And some say, well, it's due to the times in which we live. Some attribute it to other things. But it's sad to see the church, just because they want to maintain having church, to compromise the truth. And so they become friends with LGBTQ, whatever all the labels are. And they become friends with.

**31:29**

you know, people that are opposite sex, living together. They don't confront any of these things. They don't practice church discipline. They begin to ordain homosexual pastors or priests. They begin to ordain women preachers. And they begin to compromise what scripture teaches.

**31:52**

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Well, beloved, I'm not willing to compromise those things, because I do believe in sola scriptura. I do believe in Scripture alone, and Scripture alone is what governs what we do. Everything we do, not just here in church, but it governs our life every single day. Every day, you should be engaging yourself in Scripture. You should be letting it saturate your mind.

**32:19**

Whether you listen to it being read to you or whether you read it yourself, you should be saturating your mind with scripture. And I will just tell you, as the days become more and more evil, you're going to need the word of God in your mind. You're gonna look around and see what's going on and you're gonna begin to question what in the world is going on? Where is God in all of this? Well, God's where he's always been, on his throne.

**32:47**

And if you're reading the Word of God systematically, you know exactly what's going on.

**32:53**

All of this has to happen. This is part of what He said in Scripture.

**32:59**

Let me close with one passage, and it's over in 2nd Timothy.

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**2nd Timothy chapter 3. But realize this, that in the last days, difficult times will come. Here's what's going to categorize those last days. Men will be lovers of self. Are you seeing that? Men will be lovers of money. Are you seeing that?**

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**Do you see any of these things? Disobedient to parents?**

**33:48**

**ungrateful. You know I find it very interesting and you notice this during this month where Thanksgiving occurs in your stores you may have a little small display with anything that has to do with Thanksgiving. What started coming out on the shelves real early Halloween and Christmas? Nothing about Thanksgiving right? Thanksgiving is not popular it's not popular to give thanks.**

**34:13**

**to be thankful. No, it's more popular to be these things. It's more popular to be a lover of money and boastful and arrogant and abusive and disobedient to parents. He even goes on to say unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, that is unforgiving, malicious gossips, that is slanderers, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous.**

**34:42**

**reckless, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power? How**

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are we supposed to respond to this? He says at the end of verse 5, avoid such men as these. In other words, have nothing to do with them.

### **35:07**

You say, well, I want to reach them for Christ. Well, then reach them for Christ. That's the only thing you'd have to do with them. Preach the gospel. Talk about hell. Maybe some of the reasons why people aren't responding to your presentation of the gospel is because you've sugarcoated it. Maybe because you're not willing to talk about something that will make you and them very uncomfortable, and that's hell.

### **35:29**

Most of the people that I talk to, all of them tell me they're going to heaven. And if I don't know them, I don't know anything about their life, I don't know anything about what they believe. But if I do know them, and I know what their life is like, and whether they live for Christ or not, or have anything to do with the things of God or not, most cases what I run into is they don't have anything to do with God. And yet they believe they're Christians and they believe they're going to heaven.

### **35:56**

and what a rude awakening that they're going to get. So you know what you need to talk about? You need to talk about the reality of judgment. The reality of the fact that they think that they're going to get in on their righteousness, but they need the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness of Christ comes by faith in Jesus Christ. And see, if you believe in Sola Scriptura,

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**36:20**

You believe in sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christa, sola Deo gloria, then you're going to have the right gospel and you're going to preach that to them and you're going to explain to them, no, you have to have grace that comes from God, you have to have faith that comes from God, you have to be drawn to Christ by God.

**36:40**

You have to come according to Scripture.

**36:44**

That's the only way you have to come.

**36:51**

So as we close out this morning, I want to remind you, like in Colossians 3.1, that since you've been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is. Keep seeking Him. He's seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind, your version may say affection, set your mind on things above. Don't set them on the things of this earth.

**37:21**

You have your mind or you have your affections on this earth, you're gonna be a yo-yo, you're gonna be a roller coaster with those emotions because one minute you're gonna look and see that things are pretty good and the other minute you're gonna see a chaos and a mess going on. You gotta set your mind on heaven. You gotta set your mind on Christ. He says here, you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God and



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when Christ who is our life is revealed, then you also be revealed with Him in.

**37:49**

**Glory. Get your mind off yourself and get your mind on Jesus.**

**37:59**

**Now, if you're here today and you don't know Him, then that's gonna be something very difficult to do. And at that point, I would certainly urge you to stop trusting your own righteousness and repent and turn to Christ, who alone can save you, Christ alone, Sola Christos, and come to Him because He died for you.**

**38:28**

**Now beloved, as we share in the Lord's Table now at this time, that's what this table is all about. It's not transubstantiation that the Roman Catholic Church taught. It's not that the bread and the juice become the literal body and blood of Jesus, no. Jesus said, do this in remembrance of me. This is a memorial. This is a remembrance.**

**38:51**

**Here there's another memorial coming up this week and it's called Veterans Day where we're going to remember our veterans who have fought for our country, who have provided the freedom that you and I enjoy and those who are serving in the military today. So that's a memorial. We're going to remember them, right?**

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**39:08**

**But what's a greater memorial, and the one who gives you true freedom, is Jesus. And Jesus gave his very life for you and me. He took our punishment on himself. And when you trust him, when you believe in him, you commit your life to him, then he gives you his righteousness. That's what you want. Sola Deo Gloria, to God alone.**

**39:38**

**Be the glory. Let's pray.**

**39:44**

**Heavenly Father, we do want to give you the glory. Your name is worthy of praise. Your name is worthy of glory. And this morning, we just come to you. We acknowledge these five solas. We affirm what your word says about them. We see it. We proclaim it. We believe it. And this morning, we want you to be glorified.**

**40:13**

**We want you to be glorified as we come to your table and as we come examining ourselves. And I pray this morning that no one would take of this table in an unworthy manner, but they would examine themselves first and offer you praise. Lord, save those who are not saved. Bring them to faith in Jesus. Grant them the understanding of the gospel.**

**40:43**

**them to be born again. We pray all this in your precious name.**