

The Five *Solas* of the Reformation: Only Christ (Luke 24:13–35)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (3/21/2021)

Introduction

Last week we introduced the five *solas* of the Reformation—five doctrines that were used to correct the errors of the established church, the church of Rome. While the church of Rome holds Christ as Savior, the gospel is corrupted by the so-called *saving merits* of Christ entrusted to the church and received through sacraments administered by priests. According to Roman teaching, a penitent sinner is technically not saved by Christ but by faithfully adhering to the sacraments and doing good works.

The Reformers argued from the Scriptures that salvation was only through Christ by grace received through faith alone. The work of salvation brings glory to God alone.

Today we want to examine *sola Christus*—Christ alone, Jesus’ unique position to save His people.

I. Christ Unique

1. The uniqueness of Jesus is testified in Acts 4:12: *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

a. Unlike any other, Jesus’ teachings were *authoritative* and *dogmatic*.

“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:28, 29).

“No one ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46).

b. Jesus’ *life* (His birth, ministry, and miracles) was miraculous.

c. Jesus’ demands on His followers are drastic but not excessive; He either owns us fully or we are not His.

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” (Luke 9:23-25).

2. Jesus made *extravagant* self-claims about Himself.

a. Jesus claimed that He was (1) the only way to God, (2) the only truth from God, and (3) the only means to life in God (John 14:6, 7).

b. Jesus claimed to be the Light of Life, the Son of God, the Resurrection from the Dead, and Eternal Life for all who believed in Him.

“Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life’” (John 8:12).

“This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead [spiritually dead] will hear the voice of the Son of God [regeneration], and those who hear will live [reborn to spir-

itual life]. *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself*” (John 5:25, 26). Jesus said this to explain His statement in verse 24: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has [present indicative active—“already has”] eternal life.”*

- c. Jesus has this authority only because He offered Himself as a sacrifice in the place of sinners and rose the dead so that a Holy God could forgive and save them. *“I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures”* (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

II. Christ Testified

1. A powerful post-resurrection encounter demonstrates the work of God in the saving of His people. The resurrected Jesus joined two disciples on the journey to Emmaus, a town about seven miles from Jerusalem. The significance of the passage is its tying two *solas* inseparably together—*Sola Scriptura* and *Solus Christus*—indeed, it also reveals two others—*sola gratia*, only grace, and *sola fide*, only faith.

“Beginning with Moses [the Torah] and all the Prophets [defenders of the Torah], he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:37).

2. The passage reveals the wisdom and power the Lord uses to bring people to Himself.
 - a. First, He did not immediately reveal Himself to them so that they might first understand their own ignorance of Scripture and failure to believe the Word of God.

Their expectations were not based in Scripture, but in their own interpretation of what they believed should be. Their discouragement came when their expectations were dashed by His death at the hands of their chief priests and rulers. Their hope was in a Messianic warrior who would redeem Israel by over-throwing the Gentile dominion of Israel and freeing her to reclaim her place as the theocratic kingdom. Their view of Christ was inadequate, seeing Him only as a *“man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”* They did not understand that He was God come in the flesh to save His people from their sins.

However, as He demonstrated the power of Scripture, He turned their disappointment into pure joy. Only then did He truly become known to them.

- b. Second, He gently probed them as to their interpretation of the events that outwardly appeared to be a tragedy.
 - 1) They had a natural inclination to ignore the Scriptures.
 - 2) Their ignorance of the Scriptures was due to their spiritually sluggish minds.
 - c. Jesus used a penetrating question to redirect their interest to the Scriptures: *“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”* (v. 26)
3. The irresistible grace of God then granted them true faith that rested on the infallible Word of Truth.
 - a. Their hearts were convincingly awakened to Jesus’ person as He interpreted to them all the things concerning Himself revealed in the Scriptures.
 - b. Their revived spirits were bound to Him, insisting that He stay with them at the end of their journey. When He revealed His true identity to them and disappeared from their sight, they confessed:

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (v. 32).

- c. Their plans in Emmaus were suddenly abandoned. They returned *“the same hour”* and to Jerusalem and to their brethren who also shared the excitement of Jesus’s resurrection.

III. Christ Glorified

- 1. Christ was the *perfect sacrifice*, making His people acceptable to God.

- a. The law of God requires the shedding of blood for forgiveness of sin—a propitiation for justification.

“Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (Hebrews 9:22).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

[Believers] *“are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26).*

- b. The full satisfaction of the cross involves the substitutionary, penal, and complete sacrifice of a perfect innocent Lamb for sinners.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many” (Mark 14:24).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- 2. Jesus was both the *Offeror* and *Offering* required by God’s justice for the salvation of His people.

“And for this cause, he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:15).

- a. Jesus sacrifice was a *reconciliation*, bring His people to God.

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:10).

- b. Jesus sacrifice was a *redemption* (purchase price), freeing slaves from bondage to sin.

“You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

“Care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Worthy are you ... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God” (Revelation 5:9).

- c. Jesus’ sacrifice was of itself *effectual*—there was nothing potential about it.

“[Jesus] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:12).

3. The resurrected Christ continues as His people's *High priest*, mediating for them before God.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

a. As their High Priest, He was appointed of a different order—that of Melchizedec—an eternal priesthood.

"For it is witnessed of him, 'You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek'" (Hebrews 7:17).

"He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:27).

b. He represents only the people God gave to Him.

"But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:36).

"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours" (John 17:9).

4. Because of His faithful obedience, Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is now exalted as King of kings, and Lord of Lords.

"God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9–11).

He replaced Adam as the covenant head of a new race to populate His eternal kingdom over which He will rule. Indeed, the day is coming when we shall see Him return for us.

Conclusion

1. Are you trusting Christ alone for your salvation, having repented of sins past and experiencing the victory over the flesh in your daily walk? Are you a testimony to others of His saving power?
2. Are you fully surrendered to His Lordship over your life? Is Christ everything to you? Are you willing to give up everything to follow Him? Are you a true Christ-follower?
3. Are you daily growing in His likeness, loving Him in humble obedience, serving Him by loving and serving others? Do you love His church and faith-fully participate in the fellowship of the saints?
4. Are you living in the hope of the kingdom of God, doing His will now and longing for His return?