

Solus Christus (Ezekiel 34:20-24; Matthew 9:1-8 and John 14:1-7)

15-Oct-2017

This the 3rd of a 5 part series on the *Protestant Reformation* - as we celebrate and remember the Reformation which began 500 years ago.

There's Bibles in front of you - and you should have a sermon outline - to write notes if you wish...

Before we start - let me pray for God's wisdom, guidance and understanding first

Intro/Recap

So 500 years ago this month

The Protestant Reformation began

And it was basically a protest against the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church at the time

And as we said last week - the Reformers came up with "5 Solas" - Sola is Latin for only or alone

So they came up with 5 Only's or 5 Alones - 5 Solas...

The protesters were basically saying that the Church's teaching should be based on:

[Powerpoint 1-5 Solas]

Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone

Sola Gratia - Grace Alone

Sola Fide - Faith Alone

Solus Christus - Christ Alone

Soli Deo Gloria - Glory to God Alone

Throughout this month - we will look at one of these *Five Solas*

Two weeks ago we looked at ***Sola Fide*** - Faith Alone - and we said that Martin Luther and other reformers realized we are saved from our sin and rebellion against God - by Faith in Jesus - not by anything that we do!

Last week we looked at ***Sola Scripture*** (Scripture Alone) - and Martin Luther - who struggled with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church at the time - because they were teaching stuff that wasn't in the Scripture

So Martin made a stand - and said He wouldn't accept any teaching that was not in the Bible

And I left you hanging a bit last week - as I showed you a video clip of Martin on trial - and refusing to back down in front of one of the Pope's Cardinals

Martin faced death if he didn't back down

But I never explained what happened next...

The court adjourned to decide what to do with Martin

In God's grace, thankfully he was kidnapped by Duke Frederick who took him to safety in Wartburg Castle - where Martin translated the New Testament into German...

Scripture Alone!

(pause)

Context

Which brings us to this week

[Powerpoint 2-Solus Christus]

This week we look at Solus Christus - Christ Alone

As Martin started to read John Gospel's and he saw how John the Baptist always pointed to our Lord Jesus - and not to himself. Martin realized the church (and us) must do the same - always point to Jesus not ourselves.

Here's a quote from Martin:

[Powerpoint 3-Martin quote 1]

The devil does not intend to allow this testimony about Christ. He devotes all his energy to opposing it and will not desist until he has struck it down and suppressed it. In this respect, we humans are weak and stubbornly perverse and are more likely to become attached to saints than to Christ. Within the papacy [church] they have preached about the service rendered by these beloved saints, that we ought to rely on their merit. And I too, believed and preached thus. St. Ann was my idol"

Martin goes on to say:

[Powerpoint 4-Martin Quote 2]

"What I am telling you is that it is easier for us humans to believe and trust in everything else than in the name of Christ, who alone is all in all, and more difficult for us for us to rely on him in whom and through whom we possess all things."

So that was one of the major issues of the Reformation. The Church clouded the Gospel of Jesus by adding assistants and helpers in to the mix to "help" people get saved and right with God. The Church at the time preached a Gospel of "Jesus AND..."

Jesus and Mary; Jesus and Purgatory, Jesus and indulgences, Jesus and the Saints, Jesus and the Church, Jesus and the Priest as a "go between" humans and God - and so on...

Martin and the other reformers came and cleared up the fog - and rid the church of all these helpers in salvation. They taught - all we need is JESUS!

Why we need Jesus?

So why do we need Jesus?

[Powerpoint 5-Heading]

Well that's where our OT reading from Ezekiel 34 comes in

If you'd like to turn to Ezekiel 34 now...

The context is that God has told the shepherds of Israel

Not physical shepherds - but spiritual shepherds - the leaders of Israel - that they haven't been looking after the sheep of Israel - the people!

[Powerpoint 5a-Lost Sheep/Promised Shepherd]

The leaders have led the sheep/people astray - and they've been lost from God - just like lost sheep

And God's had a gutful of their bad leadership

So God promises in v11 - that He Himself will look for His lost sheep and take care of them Himself

Why are they lost from God?

1. Because of bad spiritual leaders and 2. Because of their sin and rebellion against God

So God promises an end to this chaos

And He promises in v23-24

I will give you a shepherd from the family of my servant King David. All of you, both strong and weak, will have the same shepherd, and he will take good care of you. ²⁴ He will be your leader, and I will be your God. I, the LORD, have spoken.

Just like lost sheep - people lost from God - because of sin - need someone to find them and bring them back to God - back to the flock

Like lost sheep - we can't find our own way back to God

So God promises a Shepherd from the family of King David.

[Powerpoint 5b-Need Jesus because we all sin]

That Promised Shepherd is Jesus

We need Him because we can't fix our sin ourselves

As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And in Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death,

Our sin and rebellion against God - brings us physical death one day - and spiritual death - as sin separates us from God

That's why we need Jesus...

Who is Jesus?

So who is Jesus?

[Powerpoint 6-Who is Jesus]

A great place to discover who Jesus is - is in John's Gospel.

John has so many titles to describe Jesus

John 1:1 - describes Jesus as the **WORD of God** - that same word that created the Heavens and the Earth

John 1:14 - describes Jesus as **God's Word in flesh** form - living with humankind - and being full of grace and truth

John the Baptist describes Jesus in John 1:29 - as the **Lamb of God** - not because Jesus is physically a baby sheep - but because He has been sent by the Father as a sacrificial lamb to let down His life for the sin of the world

In John 6:35 - Jesus describes Himself as the **Bread of Life** - and that whoever comes to Him will never go hungry and whoever believes in Him will never go thirsty. Again - Jesus is not saying He is a physical loaf of bread or a bottle of spring water - He is describing Himself spiritually - and saying He's how we get our spiritual food and drink - by feeding off Jesus who is God's Word - and drinking God's Word into our hearts and minds - so that we have life to the full - and can live lives pleasing to God - into eternity

In John 10:11 - He says He is the **Good Shepherd** - the Shepherd that God promised in Ezekiel - the Shepherd from King David's family - And again Jesus is different to a human shepherd - who might go and rescue a sheep that's stuck in a creek - Jesus not only came to find lost sheep - people lost from God - He also came as a Shepherd who was prepared to lay down His life for His sheep to be safe and sound with God again - No human shepherd would do that for his sheep!

All these titles that the Apostle John is giving Jesus all point to what Jesus gives us...

What Jesus gives us?

So what does Jesus give us?

[Powerpoint 7-Heading]

Well - we said earlier that our sin and rebellion separates us from God - and has us spiritually dead -

Jesus fixes that by bringing us **forgiveness of our sins**

In our NT passage from Matthew 9:1-8

[Turn there now]

Some men bring a bloke who is paralysed to Jesus - so Jesus can heal him

But notice that Jesus does two things

He recognizes that the men have faith that He can heal the paralysed man

But then He heals the paralysed man - by healing Him spiritually not physically

We all need that spiritual healing - way before any physical healing we might need

Jesus gives the man what he needs first - rather than what he wants

He forgives His sins

[Powerpoint 7a-forgiveness]

This gets Jesus in hot water from the teachers of the Law - who think Jesus is blaspheming - because only God can forgive sins

But Jesus is not blaspheming because - Jesus is fully God - He is God's Word in flesh -

And as He goes on to say - He has the authority to forgive sins!

How is Jesus able to forgive sin?

By His death on the cross - as the perfect sacrificial lamb of God

As the writer of Hebrews says in 9:22

without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness

And in Hebrews 10:10

we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all

So forgiveness comes through Jesus Christ Alone!

Not from the Pope, or Saints, or Mary, or the Church, or spending time in purgatory

Not from us working off our sins - like we are reducing the debt in our bank account?

By Jesus Christ Alone

What Jesus gives us doesn't stop there

He didn't stay dead on the cross

He had power over death itself

[Powerpoint 7b-Resurrection]

He demonstrated this first by raising his dear friend Lazarus from the dead - after he had been dead 4 days and then explained to Lazarus' sisters

"I am the **resurrection and the life**. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus not only raised Lazarus from the dead - He Himself was raised from the dead - 3 days after His own death

So believing in Jesus - believing he has the power to forgive sin and raise people to life - means we get a **resurrected life into eternity** - to spend forever with God

[Powerpoint 7c-Spirit]

But there's still more because by believing in Jesus - we are reborn - born from above - **reborn with the Holy Spirit** inside us (John 3) - the Holy Spirit becomes our life coach

Which is why the writer of Hebrews is able to say in Hebrews 7:25

²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

[Powerpoint 7d-saves completely)

So Jesus **saves us completely** - And we can't be snatched out of His hand (John 10:28) and he lives and **speaks up on our behalf to God** the Father

This is only possible by Jesus Christ Alone!

[Powerpoint 7e-Assurance]

This gives us a rock solid guarantee and assurance that when we believe in what Jesus has done - in His death and in His resurrection - we are right with God - completely forgiven - and guaranteed a place in Heaven forever

No one else can give that promise and guarantee...

Response?

We've heard why we need Jesus? [Can't fix sin ourselves]

We've heard who Jesus is? [Those titles from John]

We've heard what Jesus gives us? [Forgiveness and eternal life]

How do we respond?

[Powerpoint 8-Heading Response]

Before we think about our response

We have to have a story don't we?

There's a story of a missionary who lost his way in an African jungle. He could find no landmarks and the trail he was on vanished. Eventually, he stumbled on a small hut, he asked the native living there if he could lead him out of the jungle.

The native nodded. Rising to his feet, he walked directly into the bush. The missionary followed on his heels. For more than an hour they hacked their way through a dense wall of vines and grasses. The missionary became worried: "Are you sure this is the way? I don't see any path."

The African native chuckled and said over his shoulder, "Bwana, in this place there is no path. I am the path."

That's the whole point

We are stuck in the jungle of sin.

We're lost from God

There's only one way out.

Jesus says so Himself in our NT passage from John 14:1-7 [Turn there now please] - where He tells his mates where He's going to Heaven and how they can join Him

He says in John 14:6

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"

[Powerpoint 8a-John 14:6, Acts 4:12]

Christ Alone - is the only way to be forgiven

Christ Alone - is the only way to eternal life

Christ Alone - is the only way to the Father in Heaven!

That's what Martin Luther and the other Reformers - stood up for

As Acts 4:12 says:

Salvation is found **in no one else**, for there is **no other name** under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

So will we be as brave and bold as the Reformers and say Jesus is the only way?

Canadian-American preacher Henry Allen Ironside was occasionally interrupted during his sermons with the objection that "there were hundreds of religions and no one could determine which was the right way". Ironside would answer by indicating that he knew of only two religions. "One covers all who expect to be saved by 'doing' - the other who have been saved by something 'done'. The whole question is very simple - Can you save yourself - or must you be saved by another?"

Of course - as well as acknowledging Jesus is the only way - we have to accept that personally

[Powerpoint 8b- Personal Lord and Saviour]

As Martin Luther puts it:

"The life of Christianity consists of possessive pronouns. It is one thing to say, "Christ is a Saviour"; it is quite another thing to say, "He is my Saviour and my Lord." The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second.

So our response needs to be as in Romans 10:9-10:

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

If we are fair dinkum about Christ Alone

We need to repent our sin - and confess that Jesus is the Lord of our life now

And then believe that He died for our personal sin and was raised to life for us personally. Then we are saved!

Once we have acknowledged that we are saved by Christ Alone

We need to respond as the writer of Hebrews tells us:

[Powerpoint 8c-Fix our eyes on Jesus]

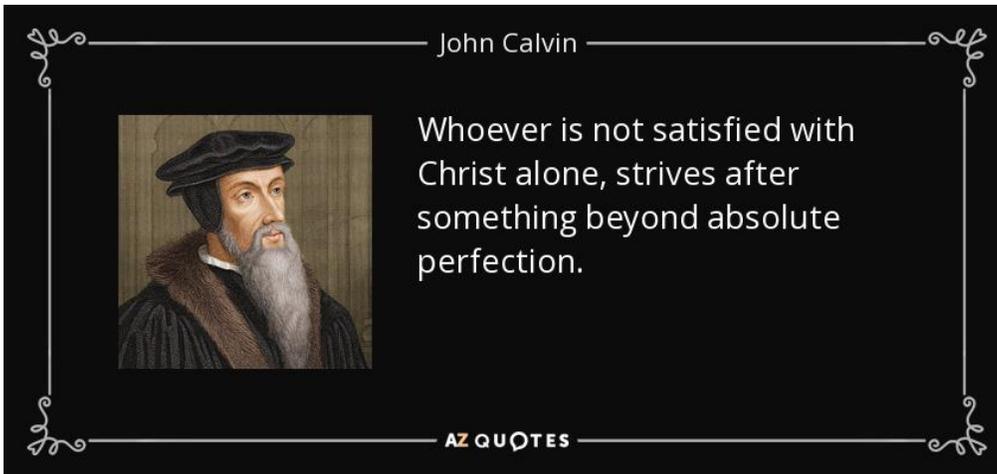
12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Fixing our eyes on Christ Alone the pioneer and perfecter of our faith!

Let's not try to add to what Jesus has already completed

[Powerpoint 9-Calvin]

As the Reformer - John Calvin says:



So let's be like John the Baptist and the Reformers - and be people who always point others towards Jesus and not towards ourselves

Let us say to ourselves, as John the Baptist himself said in John 3:30 "Jesus must become greater, I must become less"

Let's pray