

Reformation 500 Week 3 “Solus Christus”

This morning we continue our joyful celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant reformation AND the recovery of the Biblical truth that God graciously brought about through the Reformers. (Hus, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin)

-
- IN our celebration, we have been reviewing the 5 pillars, 5 Biblical standards that were recovered at the time of the Reformation. We affectionately call them the 5 Solas. They are 5 statements regarding our Salvation that end with the word “Alone.” Or the Latin word “Sola”
- We covered two of the five pillars, noting that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone.
- Today we will consider the source of that grace and the object of our faith in the third Sola: “Solus Christus” In this sola we find that we are saved, redeemed, delivered from the wrath of God by the work of Christ ALONE!
- As we sang earlier: “In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song.”
- Let’s begin our study with a visit to one of my favorite places, the upper room, where the Lord Jesus and his disciples share in the Passover feast.

The disciples have all gathered in the upper room. The preparations for the Passover Feast have been made and John tells us:

John 13:1 **Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

- Even though Jesus had warned his disciples of his suffering and death, the unfolding of the events of that evening left them shocked and dismayed.
- They were blind to the treachery of Judas and confused about the kingdom, resistant to the suffering of Christ.
- Certainly they were shocked, even disheartened when Jesus said:

John 13: 33 **Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’**

- I think we all know THE Apostle Peter well enough to know that He can’t just sit back passively when Jesus tells him that he can’t do something.
- When Jesus said, **“Where I am going you cannot come.”** Peter speaks up:

36 **“Lord, where are you going?”** Jesus answered him, **“Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.”** 37 Peter said to him, **“Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”**

- Oh Really Peter?!!

38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Many of us have discovered like Peter that Jesus has a way of bringing us back down to earth when we begin to think too highly of ourselves.

Put yourself in the place of the disciples: What you hoped would be a joyful, festive holiday evening together has ended up in controversy and misunderstanding.

- Why did Judas leave before the main course was served? What was the buzz in the middle of the meal between Jesus and John?
- And Peter! Oi Vey! First, he wouldn't let Jesus wash his feet then he asked Jesus to give him a bath. And after supper they argued over what sounded like travel plans.
- When the dust settled, Jesus turned to the disciples and with that same voice that could calm the raging sea, he said:

John 14:1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- Now they know, Jesus is returning to the Father. He is headed back to Heaven, and he wants his disciples to understand that He has reserved a dwelling place in the presence of the Father for every single one of God's precious children.
- Within a matter of hours, he will go to the cross. There on that instrument of judgment he will bear the wrath of God for the sins of the Elect.

Looking back at John 14:6 You cannot help but notice the exclusivity of Jesus' claim when Thomas asks: "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

- Jesus is returning to His home in glory where he will be seated at the right hand of the Father. And Thomas asks, "HOW do we get there? What is the way?"
- Jesus responds saying:

John 14 6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

My Friends, there is only ONE way in which sinful man may enter into the presence of a righteous and holy God and that is through faith in the Life, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- No measure of good works can add anything to Christ's perfect life, no amount of suffering can increase the efficacy of Christ's sacrificial atonement.

- The last words that Jesus spoke from the cross were these: “**It is finished.**”
- When he bowed his head and died, the debt of sin for those who would believe, from Adam, all the way through the last tribulation saint was paid in full.
- What does this Scenario in the upper room have to do with the Reformation?

The Reformers boldly declared the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement for salvation in a time when the R.C.C taught that salvation came through Christ PLUS the Sacraments, Christ PLUS the intercession of Mary, Through Christ PLUS One’s obedience to the Pope.

At the time of the Reformation, as it is today, the R.C.C. confessed the exclusivity of Christ BUT it purposefully neglects the Biblical Truth concerning the sufficiency of Christ’s work.

- In doctrine and in practice it denies that Christ alone is the sole ground of justifying grace, which is received by faith alone apart from the works of man.
- Listen to the words of Thomas Aquinas, speaking on behalf of the R.C.C.

“Christ’s passion (suffering) works its effect in them (believers) to whom it is applied, through faith and charity (love) AND the sacraments of the faith.”

- In essence the R.C.C. rejected the doctrine of Justification by Christ alone teaching that it is Christ PLUS, submission to the sacraments of the church that provides the merit that is necessary for salvation.

BUT, What does the Bible say?

Acts 4:12 “**there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” (*Christ Alone!*)

John 3: 17 **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**

This morning as we seek to understand the Reformed Doctrine of Salvation by Christ alone let’s turn in our Bibles to the Gospel of John Ch. 10 where we will consider these three points:

1. Christ is a Closed Door to the thieves and robbers.
2. Christ is an Open Door to sheep of God’s fold.
3. Christ is the Solitary Door in a pluralistic world.

1 Christ is a closed door to the thieves and robbers.

John 10:1 “**Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the**

door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

Verses 1 – 5 describe what we would call a “community sheepfold.”

- In those times when the shepherds would bring their flocks into the village, all of the sheep from different flocks would spend the night together in a common pen.
- A gatekeeper would stand guard at night so the shepherds could get some rest, And that faithful guard would only allow the shepherds to enter the sheepfold. No one else was granted access to the sheep.

Thieves and robbers who were bent on stealing the wool and butchering the sheep would climb the fence in an attempt to avoid the gatekeeper.

- Let’s remember the context, Jesus is addressing the Pharisees in these verses who have challenged Him for healing a blind man on the Sabbath.
- Jesus described the corrupt leaders of Israel as thieves and robbers. They should have tended and cared for the Sheep of God’s Fold.
- Instead they manipulated and fleeced the flock of God for personal gain.
- According to Ezekiel 34, it is because of the corrupt shepherds of Israel that the Lord Jesus had come to Shepherd His own Flock.

The Good Shepherd came into the fold. He called his sheep by name and leads them out from among the mixed multitude. HIS sheep follow him because they know his voice.

- IN John’s Gospel, JESUS is the good shepherd, WE see that plainly in verse 11
- The gatekeeper is the Father. He sent the Son, He opens the way for the Good Shepherd to enter the sheepfold.
- The sheepfold in this context is the nation of Israel, (Mixed Multitude)
- Jesus enters the fold (comes to Israel) He calls His sheep and they follow him and He leads them out of this corrupt world, going before them into the presence of the Father.

SO to whom is the Sheepfold CLOSED? It is closed to the corrupt unbelieving leaders of Israel. Later in verse 24-26 Jesus uses these same leaders as an example to show the blindness of unbelief.

John 10: 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

- The Word of the Lord goes forth. The Sheep that the Father has chosen before the foundation of the world that same flock that He has given to the Son hear his voice and follow Him.
- Those who are NOT his sheep, hear the same words but because there is no live in them they remain in their unbelief. Jesus said: **you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.**
- Are you one of His Sheep? Have you heard Him calling you to repent of your sin and believe? Has He opened your eyes to see the glory of His Kingdom?
- Have you walked through the Door into the Sheepfold of God?

2. Christ is an open door to the sheep of God's Fold.

John 10: 7 **So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

Verses 7-11 Describe a different kind of sheepfold.

- This simple structure, was built by the shepherd, out in the field where the flock spent most of the time. This was not a community fold, shared by other flocks this is the Shepherd's private sheepfold.
- In these verses the Lord Jesus is speaking specifically about the church, the sheep he has led out of the mixed multitude.
- Out in the field the shepherd would pile rocks in a circle big enough to keep the predators out and the sheep in.
- The unique thing about this sheepfold is that there was no door, no gate. When all of the sheep were safely gathered in, the shepherd himself would lay down across the opening so that HE literally and physically became the door.

Jesus is pointing to the fact that He Alone is the door to the sheepfold, it is through Him alone that his sheep come into the fold. Remember from John 14.

John 14:6, **Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

- Jesus didn't simply claim to KNOW the truth. He claimed to BE the embodiment of truth.
- He didn't claim to SHOW the way to God (*like many preachers or Gurus*) he said HE IS the (only unique) Way by which we come to the Father.

The Apostle Paul spoke of Jesus as the only one providing ACCESS to the Father.

Ephesians 2:18, **For through him** (Through Christ Alone) **we both** (Jew and Gentile) **have access in one Spirit to the Father.** 19 **So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,** (One Flock, called out by Christ himself into the sheepfold which is His church)

- You will remember that Jesus said:

John 10:9 **I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture**

- This beautiful verse speaks of the joy and freedom that fills the lives of God's beloved sheep.
- They enjoy free and open communion with one another, and with Christ, in whose name and strength they do all they do, coming in and going out under the faithful care of the good shepherd. (He leads me into Green Pastures, beside quiet waters)

The Reformers confronted the corrupt Shepherds of their own day. Those who were fleecing the flock of God for personal gain.

- They stood against the financial shakedown that was taking place in the sale of indulgences.
- With a loud and clear voice they declared that Salvation was by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.
- Through the proclamation of the unadulterated Gospel, the sheep of God's flock heard the voice of their shepherd and they followed Him.

The seemingly narrow claim of Jesus to be the **ONLY DOOR** to Salvation, a claim that was contested by the religious leaders of Jesus' day was rejected by the Pope and Cardinals in the time of the Reformation. And the claim of "Solus Christus" is hotly contested even today.

3 Christ is the Solitary Door in a pluralistic world.

The times have changed. We no longer live in the theological world of the sixteenth century, and as a result, the battle for the truth, the confession and proclamation of Christ alone must be waged on a different front.

- The Christian Worldview of the 16th century has given way to the secular humanist worldview of the 20th century.

In the age leading up to the renaissance people considered it impossible **NOT** to hold a Christian Worldview. However, starting with the Enlightenment, the thinking of society has dramatically changed.

- Today most people totally reject the Christian Worldview.
- Scientific discovery and human reason have replaced the Bible as the newfound standards of truth.

When it comes to ethics and morality, the pervading mindset of our generation rejects the idea of absolute truth. (Whatever you believe to be right in your own mind is how you should live your life. Just don't hurt anyone else in your pursuit of happiness)

When we declare that Christ is the ONLY way to the Father, when we proclaim that No One comes to God but through Him, When we teach that Jesus is the only door that opens to eternal life, We are viewed as narrow minded, intolerant haters.

Quote by Sam Storms

“We live in a world that is growing increasingly uncomfortable with religious exclusivism. The traditional Christian claim that Jesus Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and that salvation is available only to those who consciously put their faith in Him is now regarded as both arrogant and offensive. The "scandal of particularity," as it is commonly called, may well be the most volatile and urgent issue facing the church in the 21st century.”

It is one thing to experience pluralism and moral relativism on a college campus, you expect that; it is quite another thing to hear it coming from our pulpits.

In keeping with the secular thinking of the day, there are portions of Evangelical Christianity who have significantly watered down the Gospel.

- Many who call themselves Protestant today have bought into the lie that specific truth claims don't really matter you can believe in any god as long as you are sincere. (That's Pluralism)
- You can be a sincere Buddhist and go to heaven.
- You can be a sincere Muslim and go to heaven.
- It appears that sincerity has replaced Jesus as the way, the truth and the life.

One Pastor I deeply appreciate said, “If the church of the 16th century needed reformation, the church of the 21st century is even more desperate for Reformation.

- The Good News my friends is that God is bringing about a new reformation, a great revival of the truth has already begun in the church across the globe.

Like the Reformers in the Past TODAY'S new generation of Reformers emphasize a knowledge that comes through Divine Revelation and not human reason.

- These modern Reformers believe that Human Reason was given by God to serve theology, under the supreme authority of the Scripture.
- It is on the Basis of the Bible Alone that we possess objective truth and a knowledge of the comprehensive plan of God for his creation.
- The Bible is the lens by which we rightly interpret who God is, who we are, and the way that the World works.

Remember in the opening video Elder D.J. Ward said:

“The death of Christ was not an attempt it was an accomplishment!”

- The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a Dream saying:

Matthew 1:20b, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

- HE ALONE WILL save his people from their sins!

The Angel did NOT say, He will attempt to save his people. He did not say He will TRY to save his people or He Hopes to Save His people. He said He WILL save His people, His precious sheep from their sins.

Elder Ward went on to say, “If anything is left up to you then He didn’t accomplish it.

If He did do it you can leave here rejoicing that your sins are now under the blood and He stands as your substitute. Your mediator before God this morning pleading His blood. You can rest in the finished work of Christ because we are saved by Christ Alone!

BB Warfield Quote:

"There is nothing in us or done by us, at any stage of our earthly development, because of which we are acceptable to God. We must always be accepted for Christ's sake, or we cannot ever be accepted at all. . . . This is not true of us only when we believe. It is just as true after we have believed. It will continue to be true as long as we live. Our need of Christ does not cease with our believing; nor does the nature of our relation to Him or to God through Him ever alter, no matter what our attainments in Christian graces or our achievements in behavior may be. It is always on His "blood and righteousness" alone that we can rest." B.B. Warfield