

11-05-2017

**Message: Solus Christus - Christ Alone**

**Text: Hebrews 10:1-18**

## **Introduction**

A. As we study the recovery of biblical truth during the Reformation that began 500 years ago last Tuesday,

1. we should be thanking God that in His kind providence He has granted such a recovery of the truth of Christ to His churches throughout the world and to us here today who believe in Christ as our crucified Savior, risen Lord, returning King, Who is God, blessed forever.
2. seeing how the truth of God's Word can too easily over time be replaced by tradition, including what pastor so-and-so says, what we've always heard, what is sold in Christian book stores, we ought to carefully cling to every word of God, by which Jesus said we shall live.
3. And if we have any interest in evangelism, in helping people understand the truth of God's Word, in making disciples of Jesus both here and among the nations, we should take interest in the erosion of truth in the western church, the church of Rome, distortions, misinterpretations, errant additions that unfortunately continue to be taught today among the world's 1.3 billion Roman Catholics. The United States, behind Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines, has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest number of Roman Catholics in the world. 82 million in this country identify as Catholic, the largest religious group in 35 of our 50 states.

B. The 5 slogans of the Reformation represent biblical truth by which the church needed reforming, and needs to be always reforming.

C. The Protestants of the 16<sup>th</sup> century adopted the slogan, Sola Scriptura - Scripture Alone, because they saw their western church, the church of Rome, elevate church tradition to equal status with the Bible, leading to teachings that distorted biblical truth and practice that diverged from the word of truth. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states in The Relationship Between Tradition and Sacred Scripture (p.26),

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CCC 82 ***the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.***

D. One of the church's teachings that distorted biblical truth was the defining of justification by faith to include the process of sanctification. Not only is Christ's legal righteousness imputed or credited to us through faith, but his holy character is progressively infused into our character. Since sanctification is a lifelong process that will not be completed in this life, this would leave church members (other than Mary and a few saints) never fully

justified in this life, unable to immediately enter heaven upon death. This led the Reformers to adopt the slogan, Sola Fide - Faith Alone, faith being the instrument that unites us with the fully justified Christ that we might share in his full and legal justification immediately upon believing in Him.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger headed the Interdiacastrial Commission for the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which we will abbreviate CCC), Article 2, Grace and Justification, p.481-482)

CCC 1989 “***Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.***” Council of Trent (1547): DS 1529

CCC 1030, 1031 *All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; **but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.** **The church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect,** which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent.*

E. Tied to justification by faith alone was the Reformers’ slogan, Solus Christus (Calvin: Solo Christo), Christ alone. Given that the church of Rome has always proclaimed virgin birth, deity, death, resurrection of Christ, that the church has always held to what the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century councils of Nicea and Chalcedon affirmed about Christ being one divine person with both a human and divine nature, a member of the Trinity, the only Savior of the world, what biblical truth were the Reformers recovering by their slogan, Christ alone?

F. God’s Word makes clear that it is possible to profess what is true about the Lord, yet deny Him by our deeds, by what we do and practice. E.g., ...

Titus 1:16 **They profess to know God, but by deeds they deny Him**, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Matthew 7:21 **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven,** but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Luke 6:46 **“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”**

G. John Calvin and other reformers recognized that affirming correct doctrine was not sufficient to prevent the abuses he saw in the church in the dependence on relics, indulgences, the rosary, the Mass, and the sacraments. A major question of debate was, “Do we become beneficiaries of Christ’s work by believing the gospel or through the sacraments administered by the church? The Reformers believed dependence on the sacraments to receive the grace of Christ’s finished work undercut the sufficiency of Christ alone.

1. The influential 13<sup>th</sup> century Italian priest, theologian, philosopher Thomas Aquinas

(1224-1274) wrote (Summa Theologica, pt.3, Q. 49, Art 3) ...

*Christ's passion (suffering) works its effect in them to whom it is applied, through faith and charity (love) **and the sacraments of the faith.***

2. This dependency on the 7 sacraments of the church continues today.

CCC 1113 *The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments. **There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony** [Cf. Council of Lyons II (1274), Florence (1439), Trent (1547)].*

CCC 1129 *The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant **are necessary for salvation.***

CCC 1131 *The sacraments are **efficacious signs of grace**, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify **and make present the graces proper to each sacrament.** They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.*

H. Examples of how Rome believes sacraments confer Christ's saving grace.

1. Baptismal regeneration

CCC 1239 *Baptism ... signifies **and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity** through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ.*

CCC 1277 ***Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ.** In accordance with the Lord's will, **it is necessary for salvation**, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.*

CCC 1250 *Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called (Trent, 1546). The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. **The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.***

This teaching is contrary to the Scriptures which teach that we become children of God through faith in Christ, and contrary to the words of Scripture (spoken through Peter) that teach water baptism does not save us. As Peter witnessed while preaching the gospel to the house of Cornelius, Spirit baptism is not dependent on water baptism, which is a sign of the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, **to them He gave the right to become children of God**, to those believing in His name,

1 Peter 3:21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you-- **not the removal of dirt from the flesh**, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. ...<sup>47</sup> **"Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit** just as we *did*, can he?"<sup>48</sup> And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. Transubstantiation in the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, where the bread and wine are said to become the actual body and blood of Christ.

CCC 1376 *The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that **by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood.** This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called **transubstantiation.***

CCC 1365, 1366 *Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, **the Eucharist is also a sacrifice.** The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of the institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." **The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross,** because it is a memorial and because it applies its fruit.*

CCC 1378 **Worship of the Eucharist.** *In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine **by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord.** "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration ...." (Paul VI, MF 56)*

CCC 1392, 1393 **Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ ... preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism.** *The growth in Christian life needs the nourishment of the Eucharistic Communion. ... **Holy communion separates us from sin.** ... the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time **cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins.***

CCC 1371 *The Eucharistic sacrifice **is also offered for the faithful departed who "have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified"** (Trent, 1562) **so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ.***

3. The sacrament of Satisfaction or Penance

CCC 1493 ***One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience.***

CCC 1494 ***The confessor proposes the performance of certain acts of “satisfaction” or “penance” to be performed by the penitent in order to repair the harm caused by sin and to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ.***

CCC 1495 ***Only priests who have received the faculty of absolving from the authority of the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ.***

CCC 1498 ***Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.***

**I. Hebrews 10:1-4 The inadequacy of the provisions of the law for repeated sacrifices, symbols of Christ’s promised work, which were also reminders that sin was not yet covered/atoned.**

A. The opening context of Hebrews chapter 10 is Yom Kippur, Day of Covering/Atonement, as prescribed in Leviticus 16, where once a year, year by year, the high priest would confess the sins of Israel upon an animal as a scapegoat, and bring the blood of a sin offering into the Holy of Holies.

Hebrews 9:7 but into the second, only the high priest enters **once a year**, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

Hebrews 9:25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place **year by year** with blood that is not his own.

Leviticus 16:14 "Moreover, he shall take some of **the blood of the bull** and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.<sup>15</sup>  
"Then he shall slaughter **the goat** of the sin offering which is for the people, and **bring its blood** inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

B. The symbols of Christ’s future sacrifice for the sins of His people were never intended to be understood as effectual. The fact that they had to be repeated year by year was to serve as a reminder that their sins were not yet covered by a sacrifice acceptable to God.

Hebrews 10:1 For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, **can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer**

**continually year by year, make perfect** those who draw near.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?<sup>3</sup> But **in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.**<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

- C. The elements of the Lord's Supper are symbols of the sacrificed body and blood of Christ, and not themselves the sacrificed body and blood of Christ, and not effectual for sin in and of themselves. That they are symbols is evident from when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper - prior to his sacrificial death. His blood was not yet poured out, it was still in His veins. The disciples were not drinking His blood.

Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, "**Take, eat; this is My body.**"<sup>27</sup> And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "**Drink from it, all of you;**<sup>28</sup> **for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.**

## II. Hebrews 10:5-10 The repeated sacrifices have been superseded, replaced by the one sacrifice of Christ according to the will of God.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "**SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;**<sup>6</sup> IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.<sup>7</sup> "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"<sup>8</sup> After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law),<sup>9</sup> then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.<sup>10</sup> **By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

- A. There is no need for us to make additional satisfaction to God for the guilt and punishment of our sins through pains of Purgatory and works of Penance that make satisfaction to God for the temporal punishment due our sins. Christ alone has made full satisfaction for the guilt and punishment due to us, His people, for our sins.

- B. In the song, "Before the Throne of God Above," we sing the truth of the gospel in the words ...

*Because the sinless Savior died  
My sinful soul is counted free  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me.*

### III. 10:11-14 The Levitical priests have been superseded by the one priest, Christ, enthroned at God's right hand.

Hebrews 10:11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; <sup>12</sup> **but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,** <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. <sup>14</sup> **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

- A. Multiple priests mediating between God and man have been superseded and replaced by the one Great High Priest, Jesus, through whom we have direct access to the throne of God.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, **since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,** <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and **since we have a great priest over the house of God,** <sup>22</sup> **let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith ....**

- B. We need no earthly priest to grant us absolution of sins on behalf of Christ. We can go directly to God's throne of grace through Christ our high priest to confess and receive forgiveness for our sins.

Hebrews 4:15 For **we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses,** but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. <sup>16</sup> **Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Revelation 5:9 You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *those* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> **"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God;**

### IV. Hebrews 10:15-18 The adequacy of the provisions of Christ in mediating the New Covenant renders a sacrifice for sins no longer necessary.

Hebrews 10:15-18 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, <sup>16</sup> "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," *He then says,* <sup>17</sup> **"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."** <sup>18</sup> **Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.**

- A. For those who enter into the New Covenant with God through a sincere, Spirit-generated faith in its Mediator, Jesus Christ, there is full forgiveness of our sins, and no other offering for sin to be provided beyond what Christ has already provided.

- B. The word "remember" in this context is more pregnant with meaning in this and in some

other biblical contexts than we use the word in our culture. When God remembered Noah in the ark, he dried up the waters. When God remembered childless Rachel, he opened her womb. When in such contexts God remembers, He does not merely recall, but responds to what He recalls. When God remembers our sins and lawless deeds no more, God does not suffer amnesia over our sins, but does not respond to our sins, for He already responded by crushing His Son Jesus in our place. God's justice and righteous wrath is satisfied.

- C. Is there any reason you wouldn't want God's righteous wrath against you for your sins satisfied by the offering of the body of Christ for you once for all? Come to Christ, not just for a moment in life, but as a way of life. Humble yourself before the Son of God, confessing and turning from your rebellion, confessing your unworthiness. If you receive Him by faith as your great God and Savior Who died for your sins and rose again, God will look on Him and pardon you.