

“Sola Fide”
John 6:28-29
(Preached at Trinity, April 3, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Verses 1-14** record the miracle of Jesus feeding over 5000 with only five barley loaves and two fish. As the day was coming to an end Jesus sent His disciples ahead to Capernaum on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. This was followed by the miracle of Jesus walking on the water.
2. In **Verses 22-25** we find it's now the next day and the multitudes who had witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand are searching for Jesus. It was good that they were seeking Jesus, but their motivation was less than honorable. They were more concerned with their own needs and agenda than any true desire for Christ. Jesus exposed their heart.
John 6:26 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."
3. Jesus proceeded to move their thinking from the physical realm to the spiritual.
John 6:27 NAU - "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."
 - A. Of course, as we've seen, they were unable to comprehend what Jesus was saying. The people were still thinking in the physical realm. They were thinking about having their physical needs met.
John 6:31 NAU - "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness . . ."
 - B. Jesus answers them:
John 6:32 NAU - "My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven."
 - C. Again, they expressed their lack of understanding.
John 6:34 NAU - "Lord, always give us this bread."
4. The problem with fallen humanity is we fix our attention only upon earthly things, only upon things that satisfy our fleshly desires. We continually fixate upon our idols, the things that bring us pleasure and satisfy our flesh.
This multitude was simply behaving as all lost people do—they were most concerned with having their physical needs met. By nature, we are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.
5. When Jesus said in **Verse 27** "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life" their minds immediately locked onto the word "work." What works could they perform in order to earn a place in God's Kingdom?
John 6:28 NAU - "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"
 - A. Obedience to the Law was engrained into the Jewish mindset.
 - a. The Law was a strict taskmaster. The Law demands strict, perfect obedience.

- b. The Law makes demands but provides no power to meet its demands and no mercy for our failures.
 - c. The Law is a yoke, an impossible burden.
 - B. In spite of the impossibility of meeting the Law's demands, people still look to their works for acceptance before God.
The Rich Young Ruler asked Jesus:
Matthew 19:16 NAU - "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"
 - C. This is hard for prideful man. The natural response to God is "What must we do?" It is humbling to admit there is nothing we can do. We naturally want to do something.
- 6. Jesus corrects their thinking:
Verse 29 - "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
 - A. Is Jesus saying that faith is a work?
In a sense faith is something we must do. It is a command of God that we must obey. Paul referred to "the obedience of faith" – faith which is itself an act of obedience.
Romans 1:4-5 NAU - ". . . Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake"
 - B. Paul always preached the Gospel as something which must be obeyed
Romans 6:17 NAU - " But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,"
Romans 10:16 ESV - "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"
- 7. Although we are commanded to believe, it would be a fatal mistake to think faith is an independent decision of the will. Notice, Jesus says clearly it is the work of God that we believe. There are few places that says it clearer than **Verse 65**
John 6:65 NAU - "no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."
 - A. God must give us a heart to believe.
Jeremiah 24:7 NAS - "And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart."
 - B. The work of faith is the act of receiving the gift of God, which is entirely by grace. Faith is presented as a command of which man must receive it as an act of obedience. However, this faith is a gift from God, a gift given by grace without which no man will be able to believe (**Eph. 2:8-9**)
 - C. Without faith and the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, spiritual truths will be beyond our comprehension.
1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NAU - "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

8. The work of God is to receive His Son whom He has sent.
Jesus must be received by faith alone, faith which God grants us by His grace.

- I. Sola Fide, or Faith Alone was one of the great tenets of the Reformation
 - A. Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone
 1. Salvation demands good works, the works of perfect righteousness.
 - a. But we must be clear, it is not our works or our righteousness by which we are saved.
 - b. We need an alien righteousness – a righteousness of another
1 Corinthians 1:30 NAU - "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,"
 2. This righteousness is received by the means of faith, which God grants us by His grace.
 - B. The multitudes had their sights fixed upon their works
"What shall we do"
 1. Jesus corrects their thinking by declaring they need the work of God.
They must: "believe in Him whom He has sent."
 2. The Philippian Jailer also presumed there was something he could do
Acts 16:30 NAU - "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
The answer was immediate and clear.
Acts 16:31 NAU - "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"
 3. No amount of self-effort will suffice
The gift of God can only be received. It cannot be earned. If it must be earned it ceases to be a gift but a wage.
Romans 6:23 NAU - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 4. Two other sola's of the Reformation are "sola gratia" and "solus Christus"
Salvation is by grace alone through Christ alone received by faith alone.
Ephesians 2:8-9 NAU - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."
 5. Salvation is a gift freely given and that which must be freely received.
Isaiah 55:1-2 NAU - "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. ² "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance."

II. The focus of our belief is Christ alone – Solus Christus

"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

A. Jesus is the only way of salvation

1. Jesus alone is the Bread of Life—the true Bread of Heaven

2. Jesus is the only way. He is the One sent as the Savior.

John 14:6 NAU - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

3. When the multitudes turned away from Jesus they turned away from the one source of eternal life.

John 6:66-69 NAU - "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

B. Jesus must be believed and trusted as Savior

1. The multitudes came seeking Jesus. They traveled into the wilderness to find Him. They were willing to forego food in order to hear Him. And then the next morning they were still seeking Him.

2. Their hearts were not right, however

a. Some were following Him because they had heard of His miracles.

John 6:14 NAU - "Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

b. Some were convinced Jesus could be their King to deliver them from their bondage to the Romans.

John 6:15 NAU - "So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."

c. Still others were enamored by the ability of Jesus to feed them.

John 6:26 NAU - "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."

3. There is only one reason a man should set his sights upon Jesus. It is because He is the Son of God sent to save His people from their sins

a. He is the One sent from God as the Savior of His people.

John 6:29 NAU - "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

b. Jesus came to save His people from their sins

Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

3 We have to be convinced that Jesus is the only way of salvation—the only way to have our sins forgiven and be reconciled to God.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.
⁶⁹ "We have believed and have come to know that You are
 the Holy One of God."

Conclusion:

1. Look into your own heart. Upon what are you trusting for salvation? Are you trusting in your actions, even just a little?
2. Most people don't see themselves as infinitely wicked before God. Most are content in their own goodness and presume God will accept them.
 - a. This is why the Gospel is such foolishness to them
1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU - "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."
 - b. To preach about a man nailed to a cross is meaningless to most people.
 - c. To speak of sin and condemnation is offensive to most.
 - d. God demands that we own our guilt, that we confess our sin and believe and rest upon Christ.
3. Have you seen your need of Christ? Have you embraced Him? Are you resting completely in Him?
4. Every human being has the duty to trust Christ
 By refusing the Gospel you are refusing Christ. You are declaring Him to be of no value to you. You are declaring yourself without the need of His saving sacrifice on the cross and thus make a mockery of His death.
Hebrews 10:26-29 NAU - " For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries."