

Sola Fide – Faith Alone is the Instrument of Justification

Sola Fide – Faith Alone receives God’s gift of salvation. On the basis of:
Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*),
we believe God’s elect, who are called by grace alone (*sola gratia*),
are justified in the sight of God on account of the imputed righteousness of
Jesus Christ alone (*solus Christus*),
which is received by faith alone (*sola fide*),
so that no one can boast, and all glory goes to God alone (*solus deo Gloria*)

Justification is when:
a sinner is forensically (legally) declared righteous by God the Judge
at a point in time, rather than a process,
based on the merits and finished work of Christ, not our own.

Below is adapted from *Grace Unknown*, by R. C. Sproul (p. 78, Baker Books)

Roman Catholic View	Reformation View
Instrument: sacraments	Instrument: faith
Infused righteousness	Imputed righteousness
Inherent righteousness	Alien righteousness
Grace plus merit	Grace alone
Faith plus works	Faith alone
Christ’s righteousness plus ours	Christ’s righteousness alone
No assurance of salvation	Assurance of salvation

True saving faith is NOT:

- Mere knowledge or assent (James 2:19, Rom 1:19-21)
- Superficial or temporary “belief” (John 2:23-25, 8:30-31, 44, 59)
- A mere work of man, but is in fact a gift of God’s grace for which He gets all of the credit and all of the glory (Eph 2:8-10) as He produces fruit (Gal. 5:19-24) and evidences of a changed life (2 Cor. 5:17, 13:5)
- Mere professed faith devoid of good works (James 2:14, 25). To paraphrase the Reformers, “we’re saved by faith alone, but not a so-called faith that is alone”

True saving faith IS accompanied by:

- good works that *evidence* salvation (but do not *effect* or cause our salvation, instead they are caused by genuine regeneration; James 2, Matt. 7:17-27)
- Repentance (Mark 1:15, Luke 13:5, Acts 3:19, 11:18, 17:30, 2 Cor. 7:10, etc.)
- a recognition of the Lordship of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10, 16:31) and His rightful rule and claims on our life (Matt 16:24)

Key Texts on Faith in Romans: 1:5, 1:17, 3:21-5:2, 9:30-10:17, 14:23, 16:26

For deeper study: *Faith Alone*, by R. C. Sproul (or chapter 4 “Sola Fide” by Sinclair Ferguson in *After Darkness, Light*, edited by R. C. Sproul, Jr.)

Suggestions for sharing the faith, no matter who you're talking to

TURNING THE CONVERSATION TO THE KEY SPIRITUAL ISSUES:

The 2 Key Questions (adapted from D. James Kennedy):

1. Do you have assurance that if you were to die today that you would go to heaven?
2. If you were to die and stand before the God and Judge of the Universe, and he were to ask you "Why should I let you into my perfect holy heaven ..." what would you say to Him?

May I share with you what the Bible says about these questions?

[Note: Question #2 reveals what they are trusting *in* to get them from heaven, and is helpful to go back to what they have said as you share what the Bible says our trust must be in to be saved, explain their sin problem, God's good news, etc.]

"Way of the Master" lead-in question: Would you consider yourself a good person?

[Then seek to reach conscience by God's law, ex: have they lied, stolen, committed heart adultery (lust), used the Lord's name in vain, etc.? If so, what does that make them and based on God's law does that make them innocent or guilty before God? Heaven or hell? Does this concern them? Can you share with them the good news of Christ's work?]

"Romans Road" approach (fall back on in explaining gospel, mark in your Bible)

Rom 3:23 (also v. 10-12; 1:18, 2:5) -> 5:8 -> 6:23 -> 10:9-12

There are many ways to give the gospel, but the 5 "Solas" of the Reformation (5 key truths associated with the word *sola* – "alone") are great categories to help us remember the essential truths that must be explained, no matter what the faith or background of the person we're speaking with.

OUR MINDSET AND COMMITMENT ...

God's glory alone – this is central to the gospel (Rom. 3:23, Rev. 14:6-7) and we must be God-centered as witnesses who live for His glory (Matt 5:16, 1 Pet 2:12, etc.)

Scripture alone – what God's Word says (even if they don't believe it, it has power, Rom 1:16, 10:17, 2 Tim. 3:15, 1 Pet 1:23)

WHEN EXPLAINING THE GOSPEL, MAKE CLEAR THAT SALVATION IS ...

By Grace alone – make clear why we need grace because of our sin (Rom 3:10-12, Isa 64:6, Matt 5:48, Gal. 3:10, James 2:10, Hab. 1:13, Psalm 7:11) and what grace is (Rom 11:6, 3:24; Titus 3:5-7, 2 Tim. 1:9)

Through Faith alone – What saving faith is, and what the content of our faith should be, trusting 100% in Christ alone and His work as substitute, sacrifice, and savior; not trusting at all in our own works (Rom 4, Eph. 2:8-9)

In Christ alone – Who Christ is, both Lord and God (John 20:28) who we must believe in as our Lord / Master (Rom 10:9-10, Acts 16:31) and repent of our sins as we believe the gospel and follow Jesus (Mark 1:15-17)

