

Five Solas of the Reformation - September 29th – Bethany Baptist

"BACK TO BASICS, SIMPLE STATEMENTS OF FAITH"

Jude 1:25 *To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.*

Opening Prayer: We begin in the Book of Jude Chapter 1 Vs 25

"To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen" (ACT)

Self-Introduction: Bob and Kyung Jarrard, BC residents

Introduction to the Message: *Back to Basics, Simple Statements of Faith*

- Why have there always been statements of faith? Some answer are:
 - To "norm" or conform a faith group to orthodox teachings
 - To allow Believers a structure to use in organizing Biblical knowledge
 - To a guard against heretical or false teachings in the Church
 - To allow those seeking a faith group to "test the membership waters"
 - To please ourselves because we are human and we love lists and "rules"
- A brief review of some Statements of Faith in the Baptist tradition
 - Not intended to be exhaustive, complete or totally accurate
 - Recorded history is not always to be fully trusted
- Earliest Baptist movement(s)
 - Let us go to 1609 – John Smyth and 50/60 others flee to Holland
 - They had rejected the Anglican tradition of post Catholic England
 - Perhaps influenced by the Dutch Anabaptists (2nd Baptism)
 - John Smyth publishes his "20 Articles of Faith" in 1609
 - Smyth leaves his newly formed Baptist church to join the Mennonites
 - Now up to 1611 - Thomas Helwys has succeeded Smyth as leader
 - That year Helwys publishes his 27 part "Declaration of Faith"
- There have followed about 40 more Baptist Statements of Faith
 - The divisions of the Baptist movement yielded many versions
 - There still appears to be a need for a clear Statement of Faith
 - The Bethany Baptist web site presents an 11-point Statement of Faith
- This morning I suggest we take a viewing of a five-point Statement of Faith
 - The intention is to share a very basic position acceptable to many
 - Even a One Point Statement of Faith might have some in opposition
 - The early Church had a simple claim "Christ & Him crucified!"
 - Which did not stand long before it was added: (1st Cor. 15:3-4)
 - "and died for our sins"
 - and then again "and was buried and was raised on the 3rd day"
- Why this attempt today at a short catechism or statement of faith?

While we may be of one particular Christian faith group
Or of a certain domination, or "*non-denomination*", or another
Or of a movement, a distinctive, or some form of separateness
We are all called to be of One Body, His "**C**hurch" – "*Those Called Out*"

- Pastor Tony Evans, the founder of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship with 10,000 members, was the 1st Black to receive a Doctorate from DTS
Message on "*Membership vs Fellowship*"

We all are called to "*Fellowship*" with other Christians
We are allowed by God to form local bonds of "*Membership*"
We tithe and serve in "*Memberships*"
We gather together with all Christians in "*Fellowship*"

1st John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."*

- A bit of clarity as to my personal bias and position on these matters:
I am a Calvary Chapel Pastor – trained under Chuck Smith
Non-denominational in outlook, in love with denominational diversity
My only issues with denominations & their differing statements of faith?
If there comes about divisions in the Body of Christ or
When good Christian brothers and sisters are wounded or hurt
Or if we seek ways to differ rather than to agree!
- Now there, the Introduction to the Message is complete and our time is up!

Back to Basics, Simple Statements of Faith: *The Five Solas*

- Within the framework of the historical Protestant Reformation there are, Five key thoughts that have come to be universally accepted but that are not a complete collection of theological understandings nor exhaustive as to doctrinal positions or Biblical precepts
- Collectively, 5 Statements of Faith known as the "*Five Solas*" have emerged:

Slide #1

Sola Scriptura "By Scripture alone"

Sola Fide "By faith alone."

Sola Gratia "By grace alone."

***Solus* Christus** "Through Christ alone."

***Soli* Deo Gloria** "Glory to God alone."

Scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, & Glory to God alone!

- This word "*Sola*" is from the Latin for "*only*" or "*alone*" or "*only through*"
- There is an order of thought here but the first four together yields the fifth
- We have read: "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*" & "*the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus*" & "... to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever..."

We start with #1- By Scripture Alone (sole authority)

2nd Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- It is the concepts of "completeness" and "thoroughness" that drive here
 - If we rely on other wisdom literature, the teachings of men, we fail & fall
 - The Bible, 66 books by 40 authors is enough library for any person
 - The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself
- Our ministry stands on the Living Word of God, not our good intentions

1 By Scripture Alone (sole authority)

2nd Peter 1:19-21 *and so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

- The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit, infallible, without error
- It is not for any Christian to have a private interpretation of Scripture

1 By Scripture Alone (sole authority)

1st Corinthians 4:5-6 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us **not to think beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.*

- Don't get out of the box! Stay within the simple reading of the text.
- If it takes a week to interpret a Biblical text, the interpretation is wrong.
- Better unity in faith in the Word than division by pride of self.
- And so we have Sola #1 "Sola Scriptura "By Scripture alone"

Next - #2 By Faith Alone (are we saved - no works)

Galatians 2:16 *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be **justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law**; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

- Thank God that we do not have to attempt to earn our salvation
 We cannot please God by way of our works – Paul just said so 3 times
 We cannot gain salvation from the death of sin by works
 We cannot maintain our faith in God by our works
- We only need to follow this simple singular path to Salvation:

Romans 10:9 "if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord **Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved.**"

Slide #6:

2 By Faith Alone (are we saved - not by works)

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

- We do not need a "Spiritual GPS" or a chanting guru to access Godly faith
- The "No Limit Platinum/Gold/Diamond Card" of faith is the Bible

Slide #7:

The First Two Solas and Now the Third

Sola Scriptura "By Scripture alone"

Sola Fide "By faith alone."

Sola Gratia "By grace alone."

Slide #8:

3 By Grace Alone (God's will - our blessing)

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

- God's intentions towards us are to give grace, His mechanism is faith
- This is what the great evangelist Billy Graham had to say about grace:
 "Graceis the unmerited favor of God toward mankind."
- You cannot boast in the receiving but only in the nature & will of the Giver.
- **Psalm 44:8** "In **God** we **boast** all day long, And praise Your name forever."

Slide #9:

3 By Grace Alone (God's will - our blessing)

1st Peter 1:3-5 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

- At the intersection of God's perfect will, abundant mercy & fullness of grace:
 We receive in the death and resurrection Jesus a pardon for our sins
 Forgiven, we are able to gain salvation by faith in the name of Jesus
 God's power is manifested in His gift of faith to each of us that are saved
 We rest in the promises of God as He is the author & finisher of our faith

Slide #10:

3 Solas Reviewed and now #4 By Christ Alone (no other way but)

Acts 4:10-12 *let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'* **Nor is there salvation in any other**, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

- The world would have us trust in others, to say "God is dead!"
 - Nietzsche did not mean "God died!" but that God never existed.
 - Narrow is the gate and the way to God, but wide are the lies of the world
 - Pluralism, secularism, moral relativism, and post-modernism; all lies
 - Alastair Begg often uses current song lyrics to illustrate his sermons. One favorite of his is: "Tell me lies, Tell me sweet little lies" (Fleetwood Mac)
- Paul shares in **Romans 1:24-25** "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who **exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

Slide #11:

4 By Christ Alone (no other way but)

John 14:5-6 *Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

- One way to understand this text is to accept Thomas's questions at face:
Lord, where here are you going and how do we follow you?
- Jesus gave more answer to Thomas than Thomas gave question to Jesus:
Jesus is the way, the path or gate to Salvation and Eternal Life
By His revealed nature, Jesus is the Truth, the Living Word of God
He gives us life, not the physical/"bios" life, but eternal life with God

Slide #12:

So That Is Four and Now the Final Solas

Sola Scriptura "By Scripture alone"

Sola Fide "By faith alone."

Sola Gratia "By grace alone."

Solus Christus "Through Christ alone."

Soli Deo Gloria "Glory to God alone."

Slide #13:

5 Glory to God Alone (no glory to self)

Romans 16:27 "to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

- Scripture trumps commentary every time! Let's share the Word:

1st Timothy 1:17 *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever...."*

And

Romans 11:36 *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever..."*

And

James 1:17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."*

Slide #14:

5 Glory to God Alone (no glory to self)

1st Corinthians 10:31 *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*

And

Romans 7:18 *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find."*

- Pastor Chuck Swindoll once said:

"You and I are, by birth, by nature, and by choice, inwardly depraved, which is to say that we are entirely corrupt. That's not to say that we have no good in us; we do. However, anything good in us has been tainted with evil. It touches everything. Without the redeeming power of Christ we cannot halt our own moral slide."

- God knows our limits and tendencies to failure, yet He promises us:

Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Personalize this text, insert your name into "XXX can do all things..", put in place "Other Christians can do all things..", and finally we can say "Bethany Baptist can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!".

- Pray for God to empower as we take up the Christian challenge of **Hebrews 12:1** which reads *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us"*

- And trusting in the promises of God, may each of us one day proclaim:

2nd Timothy 4:7 *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, **I have kept the faith.**"*

- At the celebration of life for Professor Howard Hendricks it was said of him that he not only lived in complete confidence that he would have fullness of joy when he was at life's end *"absent the body and present the Lord"* but that he also had found great joy throughout his life in living for Christ.

Troubles and challenges of life paled for Howard Hendricks in the light of the glory of God and His love for us. We read of these truths in **1st Peter 1:6-9**

*"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**, receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls."*

Slide #15:

Five Solas in Final Review

Sola Scriptura "By Scripture alone" (sole authority)

Sola Fide "By faith alone." (are we saved - not by works)

Sola Gratia "By grace alone." (God's will - our blessing)

Solus Christus "Through Christ alone." (no other way but)

Soli Deo Gloria "Glory to God alone." (no glory to self)

Closing Thoughts:

- It is a privilege to be allowed a pulpit for a Sunday

My thanks to Pastor Kurt and the congregation for this opportunity

I pray that I have not offended nor mislead in any of this sharing

I echo Jay Vernon McGee when I call you each of you "*My Beloved*"

- Both my wife and I know that God is at work in this House of Worship

- We praise Him for the ministry and gifting here at Bethany Baptist

- May our shared Christian fellowship give all honor and glory to God

- We will close now with first a benediction and then a prayer:

In Benediction: My prayer for each of you!

"May the Lord bless, thee, and keep thee, may the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace"

And Our Closing Prayer:

- Let us close in prayer with a reading from **Revelation 11:17** which reads:

... "*We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.*"

- And God's People together in God's House respond in unison with an "*Amen*"

BACK TO BASICS, SIMPLE STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Jude 1:25 *To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.*

Sola Scriptura “By Scripture alone”

How has God’s Word proven to you personally that it is adequate, infallible, and sufficient for all your life needs and questions?

Sola Fide “By faith alone.”

How do you relate “By Scripture alone” to “By faith alone”? (*Faith comes by..*)

Sola Gratia “By grace alone.”

In a few words, can you describe Biblically what the word “*grace*” means?

Solus Christus “Through Christ alone.”

The Trinity (3 in 1), the relationship between the three Persons of GOD, and the role that each plays in our lives is not easy to explain. Give it a try!!!

Soli Deo Gloria “Glory to God alone.”

Why do we so often attempt to claim as our own the glory due to God?
