

40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

DAY 32 – Sola Scriptura, Sola Fides, Sola Gratia!

But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Ephesians 2:4 - 10

Luther and the other great reformers come up with what is called the three solas: *Sola Scriptura*: “Scripture alone”, *Sola Fide*: “faith alone” and *Sola Gratia*: “grace alone”. There was also *Solo Christo*: “Christ alone” and *Soli Deo gloria*: “to the glory of God alone”, but we will deal with the three first here today.

So, why were these three solas central to the message of the Reformation?

Because at the core of the solas is the renunciation of the centrality of the church as a means of salvation.

As we have discovered in previous days, we need to reject any sacramental aspect of the church in and of itself and be clear that it is only in the Person of Jesus that salvation and reconciliation is accomplished.

What Luther argues is that grace alone (*sola gratia*) is dependant upon the apostolic witness because it is only when we depend on the apostolic witness that we can live by grace alone. That is, we don't live by any work of the church, we live by apostolic witness to the work of Christ, the Scriptures (*sola scriptura*). So *sola scriptura* and *sola gratia* mean the same basic thing. They also mean the same thing as *sola fide* (faith alone).

We live by faith because the truth of a life are in the forms of the apostolic testimony.

We live by grace because the truth of our life is the apostolic testimony.

These three solas were used to argue over against the view of the order of the Roman Church which saw the truth of the church as not only based in scripture, but based in the church itself. The argument of the Reformers was that there is no mediation of grace or faith by means of the structure of the church; the priests, bishops etc.

But so too does this mean that for one to come to a fuller comprehension of *sola gratia* or *sola fide*, one must have access to the scriptural witness of the Apostles. That is, to truly experience grace and faith and to comprehend what these terms mean for your life, you must have access to the Bible and be able to read it yourself or have it read to you in a way that is intelligible. This is the reason the Reformers were so insistent on the scripture being translated into the local vernacular rather than in impenetrable Greek or Latin.

So, read your bible because it reveals God's *grace* and brings you back to *faith*, rather than *religion*.

PRAYER

Loving Lord Jesus,
You are the living Word
And in You alone is there salvation.
In the Bible there is the unique witness to Your Grace.
I know at times I neglect Your Word
And grow weary of its verses.
But renew in me a hunger to abide in the truth
That is plain to read in the pages of the Bible.
So that I might be reassured of Your Grace
And find comfort in the faith by which I am called to live.
May Your Word ring out across the land.
That all may find peace and hope.
Through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen