

The Five Solas (2017): Sola Scriptura

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 October 2017

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Well, I most always say, take out your copy of God's Word and turn to. Just hang on to your copy of God's Word for a moment, and I promise I will tell you where to turn and get there.

I have felt in the past when I've given some longer introductions that you're staring at the text going, when in the world is he going to get to the text? There is a text, and we will get to it this morning, I promise, but I want you just to settle in for a moment as I give you some bit of an introduction to what we intend to do this Sunday and then the next four Sundays.

As mentioned previously in our service, we are going to work through the five solas of the Reformation. And if you're already a bit confused, a sola is Latin for only.

And so the five solas are sola scriptura, or scripture alone, and that is that the Bible is God's final authority to man.

Sola gratia, which is to say grace alone, we are saved by God's grace alone. Sola fide, through faith alone.

[1 : 14] Solas Christus, in Jesus Christ alone. And soli Deo Gloria, to the glory of God alone. And the Christian life is to be lived to the glory of God.

And so these are the five solas. The Reformers loved the word sola. Because remember that they were speaking to Christian contexts, right? People who, even more than in our day, believed that they were of the Christian faith simply because they were citizens of the country in which they lived. They assumed that they were Christians. And so they're speaking to a people who would have said, yeah, yes, scripture. And sure, grace and faith. And yes, Christ.

And of course, the glory of God. The Reformers said time and time again, no, the scripture alone. Grace alone.

Faith alone. In Christ alone. To the glory of God. Alone. And these, the structure that we're going to be talking about, sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus, sola Deo Gloria, was not systematized by the Reformers.

[2 : 25] And that's the thing that you ought to know. So as we talk about the Reformers kind of holding these things up as banners over the Reformation, it wasn't systematic until much, much later.

But you pick up these themes in so much of their writing, these various alones that they stood for and supported. This morning, I want to spend a little bit of time, as I mentioned, on an introduction. And then we're going to briefly consider the doctrine of sola scriptura. But before we begin, I just want to be clear about a few things for this morning and in the coming month.

The Protestant Reformation was not the beginning of Christianity. God has had a people that he has sovereignly preserved from the fall by a promise.

And that promise was fulfilled in Christ. He has had a people from the very beginning. It didn't begin with the Protestant Reformation, as sometimes we can mistakenly be misunderstood.

[3 : 33] The truth of God had not been lost to the world and then rediscovered by an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther in the 16th century.

It wasn't completely lost. It wasn't gone all together. The truth of God had been preserved by God, although largely lost to the Western world, to European Christianity, buried in a Latin translation and by Roman Catholic tradition and papal infallibility, which at very best obscured the truth and at very worst and most often replaced it.

God had long been working amongst his people in Europe to ignite the purifying flame of the Protestant Reformation. A very popular analogy goes that God has been stacking the kindling for centuries and that he used Martin Luther's writings as a spark to ignite the fire that burned so brightly across Europe to purify the church.

Faithful men, known and unknown, were used of God. I'm so thankful for writing and distribution that began in this same time so we can know so many of these men.

But it's important to know also that there are many unknown men used by God to bring about reform in the church. Men like John Wycliffe, who in the 14th century, much before, defied Rome and translated the Bible from Latin into English and the kindling began to stack up.

[5 : 20] So we don't want to see, while the Reformation was a great turn in Western Christianity, it's a very significant thing to consider. It's been a work of God all the way through.

He threads every single bit of it. You have heard and will hear a bunch about the Reformation in the past couple of months.

We've been reading the Reformation ABCs to the children in the coming month. But I want to be clear that we do not worship the Reformers. They were all fallible men.

And boy, did some of them err. As much as they got right, they got much wrong. And we don't believe every single thing that the Reformers believed.

But as I've said, they were men used of God. Our history, our church's history, traces through the redemptive history of the Bible, by the way of the church that we see in the book of Acts, through the Reformers, and then through the Puritans, to today.

[6 : 26] The events of the Reformation were significant, and we would not exist as a people for God's possession if not for them. Now, I am not saying that God could not have established a church in the Americas without the Reformation.

But I am saying that God chose to start a church in the Americas with the Reformation. And so as such, we should want to know our history, right?

Much of our history. This is our family that we're considering as we look back to the lives of some of these men. So we should want to know it. And we should also want to know our history because those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat its mistakes.

We do not want to be known as a church for what we are against. However, sometimes to be clear about what you are for, I believe you must state what you are against.

You must clarify, not that, but this. The Protestant Reformation began as an attempt to bring correction to the Roman Catholic Church.

[7 : 39] Martin Luther did not intend to vacate the church. In fact, he was excommunicated. He was kicked out of the church, but he wanted to see the church correct its teaching.

But upon Rome's rejection of the plain teaching of Scripture, the Reformers abandoned Rome. We are Protestants, and we are Protestants in that we will protest any teaching, not just Roman Catholic teaching, but any teaching against justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

And there is much teaching out there in this way. There is much teaching in the name of Jesus Christ that would suggest to people that they must earn their way into God's favor.

And beloved, we can only stand confidently before God, be justified before Him because of what Christ has accomplished on our behalf, because of His perfect life and perfect death.

And so we protest any teaching that's in opposition to that because we love mankind and we want mankind to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

[8 : 58] all other teaching besides the gospel, the pure gospel, right? Justification by faith alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone is damning.

It's dangerous for people. And so we must defend the truth. And so the Reformation has a great deal of bearing for our lives today.

It means something for us, and we ought to take some time to understand it and to study it. And I want to try to do something multimedia, so Harold, wink, wink, nod, nod, back there.

We don't tend to do things like this very often for the potential failure of technology, but Harold's going to try to play a video for you that was played at, the video was played at a conference that happens every two years.

I would love for you all to get to go to one of them called Together for the Gospel. And I don't recall, 2016, I think, maybe, anyway, it doesn't really matter. But this is a video of a man named Martin Lloyd-Jones speaking on the 450th anniversary, so 50 years ago, about the significance of the Protestant Reformation.

[10 : 09] And just to give you a quick story about Lloyd-Jones, many people call him the doctor, he was a physician before he was a pastor, and the first church that he was hired to pastor was very

well known for its dramas.

In fact, they would often not have preaching on Sunday morning, but would instead have plays. And the pulpit on the stage was movable, and there's nothing wrong with having a movable pulpit, but it was movable so that they could put on these plays.

And on his very first Sunday when he got up, opened God's Word, he first announced that he was disbanding the dramatee, and then physically, in reality, took a handful of nails and a hammer and nailed the pulpit down to the stage.

He said, the Word of God will be central in the life of the church. So this is Martin Lloyd-Jones, 20th century English pastor in this video, so take a look.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones will now address us.

[11 : 19] At a time like this, with the world as it is, and with this multiplicity of problems that are pressing in upon us on all sides, why turn back and consider what happened 400 years ago?

Now, as I understand it, there are two main objections to the doing of what we are meant to do this evening. The first is a general objection to looking back, a feeling that the past has nothing to teach us, that after all, we are the people of the 20th century.

We are the people who have split the atom. We are the people who are encompassing all knowledge. We are the people who have advanced to such giddy heights that our forefathers could not even have imagined them.

Why should we of old people look back, and especially look back for 400 years? That's one objection.

The other is, the Reformation was a tragedy. We are told that what we should be considering today is unity, and that if we spend our time in considering a kind of disruption in the church, or a division such as took place 400 years ago, we are doing something that is sinful.

[12 : 51] And there is, alas, an increasing body of opinion in Protestant circles, which openly and unashamedly is saying that the Protestant Reformation was a tragedy, and that it is our business to forget it as soon as we can, and to do everything possible to heal the breach so that we should be back again, one with the church at home, and there should be one great world church.

I have a feeling that you've come together to demonstrate, that you've come together to make a declaration, and that is that unlike so many others at this present time, you're not ashamed of the Protestant Reformation.

The greatest need of this country tonight and of the whole world is to recapture that principle that fired the men at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

What was it about? Justification by faith. How does a man stand just before God?

God I got a head start there. You wouldn't think I've watched the video 20 times this week.

[14 : 36] Any teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ that doesn't teach that we come to Christ by faith alone is an anti-gospel. And any uniting and joining with people without the truth is not unity at all.

Any expression of love without the truth is not love at all. And beloved, this history repeats itself and you're going to hear across this next month many people make cries for what's called ecumenicalism, us coming back together for the sake of unity and the sake of peace.

And those are words that I also love but not devoid of the truth. It's good for people that we proclaim boldly the gospel of Jesus Christ, justification by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone.

And so we must learn from the past. We must arm ourselves so that we can understand the world in which we live, that we might speak clearly into it.

On your bulletin today, the historical quote, Martin Luther said, the time for silence is past and the time to speak has come. So let's talk a bit about Martin Luther, and we are almost to the text, I promise.

[15 : 56] And this event that we're working toward, the 500th anniversary of October 31st, 1517. Now, as I mentioned previously in bit, it'd be a little unfair to say this is when the reformation really began.

In fact, we could probably more accurately say it began in the following year, so maybe we'll also celebrate it next year. Martin Luther did not originally set out to be a monk.

His original intention was to be a lawyer, but in the process of his life, he was deeply troubled by the status of his soul. He was asking this question, what makes me right before God?

and he was not finding it in the religion of the day, although he was working and working and working to be found right before God. The story goes that one evening in a very intense lightning storm, lightning striking all about him, that he cried out, rather ironically, not directly to God, but through the saint, Anne, that if he would just be spared from the storm, that he would become a monk.

So he lived, and he became an Augustinian monk by the great providence of God. But as a monk, still working and laboring, he was still very troubled by the state of his soul, and in order to put his mind to rest, they put him to work translating the Bible.

[17 : 26] It's a bit of a mistake on their part. They put him to the task of translating the book of Romans. And in Romans 1, verse 17, he came across this phrase, the righteous shall live by faith.

And by the illumination of the Spirit, he came to understand, and it was not by works that we are righteous before God, but because of faith. And the Christian life was meant to be a life of repentance, which was counter to Roman Catholic teaching, and still is.

They teach that life is to be a life of penance, doing your work to fill the hole, the vacuum that you've created by your rebellion against God.

But the righteous shall live by faith. So in that day, the Roman church was trying to raise money to build St. Peter's Basilica, which exists.

You can find pictures of it online and even visit it in Rome. And so because of the great cost of building such a building, they perpetuated a practice that had been going on for quite some years of the selling of indulgences.

[18 : 39] You may hear the name Tetzels from time to time, a man who went around selling indulgences. And what indulgences were were little bits of paper that supposedly bought you and or your loved ones time out of purgatory.

Unbiblical teaching, but nonetheless, the church of Rome taught that there was this interstitial period of time where you continued to pay the penance until the penance was paid off before you could go to heaven.

And they sold indulgences in order to raise money for the church and were being quite successful at it. On October 31st, 1517, Luther nailed a document, and this was an entirely appropriate thing to do in the day.

The church building's door was like a bulletin board, so please don't put anything on our door. He nailed a document entitled what we know as the 95 Theses, which were 95 reasons that the selling of indulgences was unbiblical.

95 reasons. And this was the Wittenberg, you heard Judah saying, spelled with a W, but it's German, the Wittenberg church door.

[19 : 52] Now some time passed, the end of February, beginning of March of the following year, the 95 Theses were translated into German, without Luther's permission, I will add, by a printer.

We don't know why the printer did it, we don't actually know specifically who the printer was, but either for financial gain or maybe his zeal for the word of God, he got a copy of it, he translated it into German, printed it, and distributed it widely around Germany.

So this intention of Luther's to address the issue with the church of Rome became a national issue.

The common people began to have the word of God in their hands, not just in Latin.

This is a great trouble of the day. The Roman church held the scripture in Latin, they taught it in Latin when they taught it at all, so it would be read in Latin, and then the priest would give explanation of it.

It's quite a convenience to be able to say whatever it is you want to say. And so it was a big affront to this type of teaching, this type of use of the scripture.

[21 : 03] He was excommunicated, years have gone on, he's been teaching, he's been writing, writing widely. In January of 1521, and then in April of 1521, he was summoned to what is known as the Diet of Worms, which unfortunately looks like Diet of Worms.

In English, it's the Diet of Worms, where he was summoned essentially to recant of the things that he had taught and wrote. The Church of Rome was hoping to bring about peace.

He did this in front of the Roman emperor of the time, so it's not a small deal. We often see Luther as this amazingly bold, brash individual, and he was very brash at times, but he was sick vomiting the night before, having to stand before this council and to defend what he had written.

He was a weak man, but made strong in Christ. The two questions that were asked of him, did he acknowledge the authorship of books that had been brought to the Diet and that bore his name, a stack of them that he had written, against the Roman church, and would he stand by them or retract anything in them?

And Luther asked, this is April 17th, Luther asked for 24 hours to consider his response. So on April 18th of 1521, he said this, this was his defense, unless I'm convinced by the testimony of scripture or by clear reason, for I trust neither pope nor counsel alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves, I am bound by the scriptures I have cited, for my conscience is captive to the word of God.

[23 : 04] I cannot and will not recant anything, since to act against one's conscience is neither safe nor right. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me.

And so he's dismissed from the diet, thankfully he's encouraged to get out of town as they're arriving at his sentence.

He had already been declared a heretic, now he's declared a traitor to the state and sentenced to death. But he staged a supposed kidnapping on his route home, rescued him away, he's put up in a German castle where he spends some months translating the New Testament, the entire New Testament into German, which is a rather phenomenal feat that he accomplished.

And the word of God continued to go forth in Germany. So we're looking this morning at Sola Scriptura.

So please turn with me in a copy of God's word, breathe a big sigh of relief, 2 Timothy chapter 3.

Our text for today is 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 14 through chapter 4 verse 4.

[24 : 44] Before I read it for our benefit, let me remind you, beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good, and we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

2 Timothy 3, beginning in verse 14 and following. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season.

Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth.

[26 : 04] And wander off into myths. Our outline for this morning is as follows. Three points.

Number one, the scripture alone is God's final authority.

The scripture alone is God's final authority. Number two, the scripture alone is God's final authority for justification.

sanctification. And number three, the scripture alone is God's final authority for sanctification.

Number one, we'll take the text a bit out of order.

The scripture alone is God's final authority. First, we must establish that, and we see that in chapter four, verses one through four, in this way. And I find this to be so phenomenal.

In verse three, Paul writes to Timothy, there's going to be a time, and this was the time that Timothy himself experienced, and we still experience this time today.

[27 : 09] People are not going to endure sound teaching. There will be sound teaching, but they won't even want to hear it. And because they don't want to endure the sound teaching, they're going to accumulate, which is a strong word.

Many teachers are going to accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions. They're not going to want to hear what the word of God has to say. They're going to want to hear what they already want to hear.

They're going to gather teachers around them. We're going to allow them to go on living exactly the way they are, and they'll turn away from listening to the truth, and they'll wander off into myths.

And the point there is pointless teaching, right? Teaching that has no value at all for living. And what is Paul's instruction to that?

I just find this so incredibly encouraging as a pastor. This time is coming, right? And I experience it day to day. What does he say?

[28 : 13] He says, preach the word. Verse 2. He says, preach the word. And we're meant to be using the word in various ways. Reproving, rebuking, exhorting all different aspects of the way in which we apply the word of God to people's life, and we're supposed to be doing it with complete patience.

Man, that floors me. Like, I so, I want to flip tables over so bad sometimes. And Paul here instructs Timothy to just keep preaching the truth.

Why? Because it's God's final authority. Because God has spoken by his word. It's powerful. It is right to start our study with sola scriptura because a proper understanding of scripture is the beginning of our ability to understand any of the other solas.

The doctrine of sola scriptura is known as the formal principle, and the others follow from it. When the Supreme Court is trying a difficult case, they look at other legal decisions and laws to see what unites them.

They're looking at a difficult matter that needs to be settled. They look out there. What decisions have been made before? What else is laws that are passed state to state?

[29 : 38] What is it that's similar amongst them that unites them? Or, we could say, norms them. They look to consensus amongst these legal decisions and laws as an appeal to an authority greater than themselves.

The Supreme Court will write decisions and they're always appealing to something else. The consensus of other decisions, other laws, and this is what's called norming.

So, Martin Luther pulled in his legal training when referring to scripture as the, catch this, norm of norms that cannot be normed.

The norm of norms that cannot be normed. The authority that has no other authority, or in the Latin, because it's fun to say, norma normus non normata.

You can remember that, I think. Norma normus non normata. That is to say, we believe in sola scriptura, is to say that we believe that the Bible is God's final authority.

[30 : 51] Now, that can be misunderstood. To say that the scripture is the final authority is not to be misunderstood, understood that the scripture is the only authority.

And let me explain before you get mad at me about that statement. There are many people who will misunderstand sola scriptura to mean that all they need is themselves and the Bible.

And we have gotten many erroneous Christian teaching from a misunderstanding of what sola scriptura means. People who will go off and just reinterpret it to mean whatever they want it to mean.

A lot of people's hesitation to even understand the Bible to be God's authoritative word is that they've heard so many different understandings of the scripture.

That's why we don't have Bible studies where we say, what does this text mean to you? The text means one thing. How do we apply it in our living?

[31 : 54] So we don't mean that when we say sola scriptura. It's not the only authority. It's just the supreme. It's the final. It's the governing authority.

Right? It's the norm of norms that cannot be normed. The Bible should not be read quote unquote alone. Martin Luther said this, the scripture's authority is not a naked authority.

And that is to say, we should also look to, in helping us understand what the scripture means, things like church history.

It's helpful for us to go back and look, what has the church historically believed to be true about the scripture? If you find yourself coming to an understanding of the Bible that no one else in the history of the church has understood to be true of the Bible, you might need to rethink that position on the scripture.

And, beloved, this happens all the time. So we look to church history, and there's a lot of messes in church history too, and there's a lot of condemned heresies in history as well, but it can be a help to us in that.

[33 : 06] We look to creeds and confessions, things that help us gather together and to unify what the church has believed the scripture teaches about particular topics.

We look to the teaching of leaders, church leaders. You know, once upon a time, the position of pastor was a revered position. You know that? In our day now, sometimes I feel a little ashamed

when I tell people I'm a pastor because some of the jokers out there, right, they just get up and entertain and say nothing of any value whatsoever.

When a pastor rightly comes up and opens up the word of God, he speaks with authority, not a new revelation, but because he speaks of the word of God, right?

Preaching is authoritative because proper preaching is Bible preaching. It tells you what the text means and gives it application for your living.

The writer of Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 7, says, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of the way of life and imitate their faith.

[34 : 22] So we have at our disposal all of these tools, but the scripture is the final authority. If you're a member of Christ Family Church, Dahlonaga, or have been to a CFC 101 and not become a member yet, you've heard me talk about our statement of faith as a church.

We have statement of faith that's got 18 articles, clarifying statements about what we believe the Bible teaches about these various topics. I'm always so careful to say that the statement of faith is not authoritative, but is only in that it's consistent with the scripture, right?

So we can be shown that we have erred with the Bible and plain logic because the scripture is the final authority. The scriptures are the only inerrant revelation of God to man, and it is a closed canon.

So we see in our text today the remedy for people who will be carried off by myth, preach the truth, the final authority, right?

Prove, reprove, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and with teaching. So the scripture alone is God's final authority.

[35 : 45] And that means something for us, right? There's something at stake when we say that. So number two, the scripture alone is God's final authority for justification.

Justification is a legal term. It has to do with our standing before God, right? Will we stand before God condemned or forgiven?

Right? If we are justified, we are forgiven when we stand before God. Our record of wrong has been dismissed. So the scripture alone is God's final authority for justification.

Back up to the top of the text, verses 14 and 15 of chapter 3. Paul encourages Timothy to continue in what he has learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom he learned it.

He learned it from Paul, an apostle, right? Who is presently in the process of writing the scripture. He's writing a letter to him now that has been canonized. It's part of our scripture, 2 Timothy.

[36 : 47] And how from your childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings. It's almost like Paul says both the New Testament and the Old Testament. Remember these things which are what?

Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It's the word of God itself that the spirit of God uses to bring about our faith.

So it's God's final authority for justification. So beloved, as we go out into the world, desiring to see people come to faith in Christ, it is the message of Christ that we carry.

And it must be a message that's consistent with what the scripture teaches. I will tell you the most beneficial way to do that is to teach the Bible. Right? You can certainly share the gospel without specifically referencing the Bible, but I will tell you that it's harder to err if you actually open the scripture to people and show them where it says it.

Romans chapter 10, verse 14 and following, Paul writes, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him in whom they have never heard?

[37 : 57] Right? Here's a problem. How do people come to faith in Christ if they've not heard of Christ? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? If that news is not taken to these people, how will they believe?

And understand, this is the end of verse 14, that the word for preaching is not talking about what I'm doing right now necessarily. It can include what I'm doing right now, but it just means the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Verse 15, and how are they to preach? Unless they are sent, as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard?

From us. And then verse 17 drives the point so well. So, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

This is why on Sunday morning, the other things we do together, we come together and we open up God's word. And this isn't the only time that we do it.

[39 : 01] If you will pay any attention to the songs that we sing, it's why our songs tend to be wordy, they're scripture rich. The references abound. And the more you read your Bible, the more you're going to see that in the songs that we sing.

It's why we should rightly pray the word of God. It ought to all be consistently pointing you to the truth of God, God's final authority.

I have nothing, zero, of any value to say to see you justified or sanctified if it doesn't come from God's word.

This is why on Sunday mornings I try to reference it as much as I possibly can because I don't know what else to say. No good stories to tell you. I just have the Bible.

I want God to work mightily by it in your life. Psalm chapter 19. Verse 7 through 11. This is from this past week's scripture reading.

[40 : 00] If you're joining us in that, Psalm says, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned. In keeping them, there is great reward. God's word. And so, as God's people, we need to love God's word, and we need to teach God's word as far and wide as we possibly can so that people can be justified, so that they can respond in faith to the good news.

People ask me from time to time how it is that our church sees so many people baptized and continues to grow, and I say, well, we just do what the scripture has instructed us to do as we gather together as a church.

[41 : 18] Just get together and we do the things that we see the Bible teaching us. The reformers called this the regulative principle. If the Bible implies or expressly commands us to do something, we should do it, and if it doesn't, then we shouldn't do it.

We should stop trying to out-innovate the scripture. People ask a lot how we get so many young people to come to our church. There's a great panic, particularly in our denomination, because a lot of churches average age is 65 to 70, and they're dying, literally.

The church is dwindling out as people go on to be with the Lord. They go, how do we reach the millennials? And people are starting to look to me as the expert or something in that, and I go, we don't do anything flashy.

We just open up God's word. Because God's people love God's word. Thirdly, the scripture alone is God's final authority for sanctification.

So we begin by the power of the spirit in the word as Christians, and we're brought along, we're perfected, we're moved towards holiness by the power of the spirit and the application of God's word.

[42 : 39] If you have a trouble in this world, it's either physical, you should go see a doctor, or it's spiritual, you should go to the scripture. You should have somebody mentor you in scripture. You should receive counseling from the scripture.

This is the solution for all of our spiritual issues, the Bible and the application of the gospel of Jesus Christ found in it. verse 16 and 17.

All scripture is breathed out by God, he's the very source of it, and it's profitable. It's profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

So it's a tool that can be picked up, right, and used, employed in these various means to bring about righteousness. Verse 17, that the man of God may be complete and equipped, and here's the key word for every good work.

The scripture is sufficient as a guide for all holiness. You don't need to go beyond it. And you all know that I'm a big reader and a big promoter of reading, but only in that those books are expressions of what this book teaches, right, helping us to understand it more clearly.

[43 : 59] What does this book teach us? It is sufficient as the guide and rule for holiness, right? We asked the kids this morning, how do we know how to please God?

The scripture. He wrote us a complete book. We need nothing beyond it, and it is the final authority for holy living.

I love this. Martin Luther said, a simple layman religion, armed with the scripture, is to be believed above a pope or a council without it.

And so you, beloved, have the amazing ability to know this book and to pick it up and give it application in your life by the power of the spirit and to turn around and to do that for others.

The ministry of the church, what we are meant to do together is to be a people that minister to the word of God to one another and then to the community around us.

[44 : 59] So we get together in order to minister God's word to one another that we might grow in holiness and then to turn around and go out to our community and to do the same. Find those people who are looking for the truth.

When you speak their ears perk and they say there's something there, I want to hear more. The spirit works in them and draws them to the truth of Christ found in the scripture.

And so this encapsulates what we mean when we talk about scripture alone. Sola scriptura. God's final authority is final authority for justification is final authority for sanctification.

If you have not experienced the beauty of the Bible, please come and read it with us. Open its pages and see how God works by it.

If you get nothing out of Bible reading, there is a good chance, not an absolute chance, but a good chance that you don't have the spirit of Christ. Repent and believe.

[46 : 06] Believe in the gospel. It's found in its pages. And so find joy in doing. In closing, Martin Luther, who wrote a number of hymns. I don't know if this poem found its way into hymn form or not.

So here it is a poem, possibly a hymn I'm not aware of. He wrote this, feelings come and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving.

My warrant is the word of God, not else is worth believing. Though all my heart should feel condemned for want of some sweet token, there is one greater than my heart whose word cannot be broken.

I'll trust in God's unchanging word till soul and body sever. For though all things shall pass away, his word shall stand forever.

Let's pray together.