

A Word From Your Pastor

"And we have the Word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

II Peter 1:19-21 NIV

This year we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation! This event changed Christianity forever! Leaders like Martin Luther and John Calvin were roused to action by the corruption and abuses they saw in the Roman Church at that time. These Reformers were guided by the conviction that the church of their day had drifted away from the essential, original teachings of Christianity, especially in regard to what it was teaching about salvation. It was on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther nailed a copy of his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. One of the goals of his theses was to challenge the Roman Church regarding their corrupt practice of selling indulgences to absolve sin.

Out of the Reformation came Five Distinctives, which we call the Five Solas. Sola is a Latin word which means alone or only. The Five Solas are Latin phrases (or slogans) that emerged during the Reformation to summarize the Reformers' theological convictions about the essentials of Christianity. They are as follows:

- 1) **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture Alone) – The Bible alone is our highest authority.
- 2) **Sola Fide** (Faith Alone) – We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ.
- 3) **Sola Gratia** (Grace Alone) – We are saved by the grace of God alone.
- 4) **Solus Christus** (Christ Alone) – Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King.
- 5) **Soli Deo Gloria** (To the Glory of God Alone) – We live for the glory of God alone.

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We must begin with *Sola Scriptura*, knowing that the Bible ALONE is our Highest Authority! The Scriptures are our ultimate and trustworthy authority for faith and practice. Every word of the 66 Books of the Bible is inspired by God's Holy Spirit. *Sola Scriptura* means that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught in Scripture.

Did Jesus Christ Himself (the very living Word of God, the Word made flesh) uphold the authority of Scripture? Yes! As a matter of fact, we find Jesus quoting 78 recorded times from the Old Testament Scriptures! I especially enjoy the day when Jesus was on the Road to Emmaus with two disciples. **Luke 24:27** says, ***"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in ALL the Scriptures concerning Himself."***

Did the Apostles recognize and uphold the authority of Scripture? Yes! We find that the Apostles quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures at least 209 times! Praise the Lord! One early example is found when Jesus was calling the Twelve Apostles to follow Him. **John 1:45** says, ***"Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'"***

Even today, as it was 500 years ago and before, people reject the authority of the Bible. They then begin to create their own 'morality', and then what they want becomes 'good' and any restrictions put on them become 'bad'. In order to make that work out for themselves, they begin to cry out for 'tolerance!' That eventually turns into intolerance for people who uphold *Sola Scriptura*, which leads to persecution against people standing on God's Word!

When Martin Luther was summoned to the Diet of Worms in 1521 and asked to recant his teaching, he replied, ***"Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience would be neither right nor safe. God help me. Here I stand, I can do no other!"***

On Christ the Solid Rock We Stand!

**In Christ Alone,
Pastor Mike**