

The Five Solas of the Reformation, #5

**Celebrating the Reformation:
"Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone"**

--CEFC 10/29/17

Readings: 1 Chronicles 16:8-10, 23-29
Eph. 1:3-14
Rom. 1:18-25

Do you ever get tired of watching the news?

It can be so depressing!

Mass shootings, terrorist bombings,
political bickering and backbiting,
scandals galore.

An opioid crisis,
racial strife,
sexual chaos.

Wildfires in California;
floods in Texas;
and earthquakes in Mexico.

One day it's the threat of global warming that's going to end the world;
the next it's nuclear war.

But it's not just the news—

you see it in your own neighborhood or school or your own household—
fights and feuds,
bullies demanding their way,
marriages breaking up,
families falling apart.
Human pain all around.

Make no mistake--one thing is clear—

and it's something we can all agree on--
There is something wrong with this world—
This is not the way it's supposed to be./

Now, when you think about it,

there is something profound and even revealing about that assessment.
To say that the world is not the way it's supposed to be
assumes that there is some true or right state of things,
some way that this world is meant to operate
that is different from what we experience.

But where does that conception come from?

Certainly not from some scientific study—
science can only describe what is,
not what ought to be.

No, our sense that this world is not the way it's supposed to be
comes from a deeper source.

It's a reflection of an innate moral memory.

It points to a God-given conception of a divine design for human life
that has somehow been lost.

Christians say, this is a "fallen" world—

it's not the good world as God created it to be,
but a world that is somehow spoiled,

corrupted,
and is now dysfunctional.

It is not the way it's supposed to be./

So what has gone wrong?

The Bible gives the divine diagnosis of our condition in its opening chapters.

In the beginning, we are told, God created the heavens and the earth.

In love, God desired to show forth the majesty and excellence
of his own attributes.

Depicted as a master craftsman going through his workweek,
the divine Creator calls a beautiful world into being
and shapes it as a thing of beauty to display his own glory.

"The heavens declare the glory of God," the psalmist says (Ps. 19:1).

And as the centerpiece of his creation

God, the expert artisan,
formed Adam from the dust of the earth
and breathed his life into him.

And then, from Adam, he created Eve—

man and woman, male and female, created as his image in the world.

They were to reflect his own nature as personal beings,

with moral qualities,
able to live in relationships of love.

And these human beings were entrusted with the honored position
of ruling over God's creation

under God's authority./

That's the way it was supposed to be.

But you know the story—

Our first ancestors disobeyed God.

In response to the temptation of the serpent,
they doubted God's goodness,

they questioned God's truthfulness,

and they wanted to become like God themselves.

And they ate of the forbidden fruit

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In their pride, they assumed for themselves

the prerogative of determining what was good and what was evil.

And from that moment, the whole design of creation was turned upside down.

The roles were reversed.

The first human beings put themselves in the place of God,
disrupting God's good created order.

As Paul puts it in that passage we read from his letter to the Romans,

**"although they knew God,
they neither glorified him as God
nor gave thanks to him"** (1:21).

Adam and Eve, in effect, de-godded God.

That's what sin is.

As John Stott puts it: "Sin is the revolt of the self against God,
the dethronement of God with a view to the enthronement of oneself.

Ultimately, sin is self-deification,
the reckless determination to occupy the throne
which belongs to God alone."¹

God had crowned our first ancestors with glory and honor as his image in his world,
but their disobedience resulted in their shame,
and their relationship with God was shattered.

They were cast from the garden,
and this world has been full of weeds ever since.

This is the legacy of the sin of Adam—

His self-seeking pride corrupted God's good creation
and unleashed the power of sin and death in the world.

Creation itself has been "**subjected to frustration**," Paul writes,
and is now in "**bondage to decay**," Paul tells us (Rom. 8:20-21).

In Genesis 5:3 the writer says that Adam brought forth offspring "**in his own image**"—
his children were just like him.

They acquired the last name "sinner" the minute they were born,
even before they inevitably and not unwillingly displayed the family likeness.

We all now share Adam's image (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22,49).

This is the Bible's diagnosis of the problem of this world—

it is a world that has been spoiled by human sin.

We've all been caught up in that fall—

In our pride, we seek our own glory apart from God.

Our thinking became futile, Paul says, and our foolish hearts were darkened.

Although we claimed to be wise, we became fools
and exchanged **the glory of the immortal God**

for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. . . .

We exchanged the truth of God for a lie,

and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator.

That's why this world is not the way it's supposed to be.

¹*Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), p. 100.

In our pride, we are alienated from God,
from one another,
and even from creation itself.
That's the Bible's divine diagnosis of our condition.

But the Bible also points us to the divine response to that diagnosis—
it is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This gospel is the theme of the whole Bible—
for as Jesus said, "The Scriptures speak of me" (cf., e.g., Jn. 5:46).

The first hint of this gospel comes in Genesis 3—
After the sin of Adam and Eve,
the Lord curses the serpent,
and then speaks of one from the offspring of the woman
who would one day crush the serpent's head.

The depth of the human sin is displayed in the opening chapters of Genesis,
with Cain murdering his brother Abel,
the judgment of the great flood,
and then in chap. 11, the story of the gathering of the people
who seek to build a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens,
so that they can make a name for themselves (11:4).

Again, human beings in their pride
seek their own glory apart from God.

It is after this event that the plan of salvation, God's covenant of grace,
begins to unfold with the call of Abraham
and God's promise to bless him
and to make of him a great nation,
a nation that will then bring blessing to all nations.

As the biblical story progresses,
this promise plays out through God's providential direction, in often mysterious ways,
as Jacob's son Joseph, in an act of wicked jealousy,
in sold into slavery in Egypt by his own brothers,
but that evil act becomes a means by which
God rescues the sons of Jacob from famine.

In Egypt the twelve tribes of Israel flourish, but are then enslaved,
and God raises up a deliverer, Moses.

But Moses first has to be humbled when he tries to rescue the Israelites
through his own power.

Moses has to live in exile as a shepherd in Midian for 40 years
before the Lord reveals something of his glory to him
in the form of a burning bush.

Through Moses, the Lord God shows his power in the ten plagues,
forcing Pharaoh's hand,

and the people are rescued from their bondage,
and they escape the Egyptian army
through a miraculous crossing of the Red Sea.

They gather at Mount Sinai and the Lord again reveals his glory
in a powerful display of thunder and lightning and a thick cloud,
and he gives his law to Moses.

You would have thought that by now they would have become convinced—
The Lord, Yahweh, is God and there is no other.

But sadly, they still refuse to glorify him as God and give him thanks.
Even while Moses was away on the mountain,
their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.
They became fools
and exchanged **the glory of the immortal God**
for an image in the form of a golden calf.

The Lord in his grace, through the temple sacrifices,
provides a means of atonement and forgiveness.
He continues to reveal his glory, in the form of a pillar of cloud to guide them by day
and a pillar of fire to guide them at night.

He speaks through the prophets,
and promises his presence in the holy temple.
But the entire history of Israel reveals the hardened hearts of a sinful humanity.
The people continue to turn to idols;
they refuse to glorify the Lord as God and give him thanks.
God's gracious self-revelation to Israel in the form of the law
became a source of national pride;
and instead of convicting them of their sin,
it became a instrument of arrogant self-righteousness.

How is the promise to Abraham to bring blessing to all nations to be fulfilled
if God's people were so full of themselves?

God himself must be their Savior.

He himself must fulfill his covenant promise.

He must send his own Son as a man to do what no man had done before—
give glory to God and live humbly
in faithful love and obedience.

And then God's own Son must become the atoning sacrifice,
bearing the penalty of death that rightly belongs to sinful humanity.

And because he is God, death cannot hold him.

He would be raised from the dead as the first fruits of a new creation—
drawing people from all nations to himself,
as recipients of his grace and mercy,
to the praise of his glory.

This is God's response to human sin—

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In his atoning death, Jesus acts in our stead and on our behalf.
As our substitute, he does what we could never do for ourselves—
he bears our sin and judgment, and he takes it away.
As our representative he acts on our behalf in such a way
as to involve us in what he has done.
Jesus goes to his death alone,
but he calls us to take up our cross and follow him
in the new life that is ours by virtue of our union with him.

Jesus is the perfect embodiment of the person of God in humanity.
"He is the image of the invisible God," Paul boldly declares of Jesus.²

Jesus is what Adam and Eve were created to be,
reflecting the glory of God in his creation.
Jesus lived in relationships of love with his heavenly Father
and with his earthly neighbor;
and he exercised his rule over the natural world
so that even the wind and the seas obeyed him.
John tells us, "**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.**
We have seen his glory,
the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
"No one has ever seen God,
but God the One and Only,
who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18).

In Hebrews we read, "**The Son is the radiance of God's glory**
and the exact representation of his being" (Heb. 1:3).
"**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,**" Jesus said (John 14:9).
As the image of God, Jesus reveals God to us;
and as the image of God, he shows us
what all human beings were meant to be.
Jesus is the full expression of the perfection God intended
when he created human beings in his image.

Just consider the contrast--
Adam longed for equality with God and saw it as something to be snatched.
He sought his own glory.
Jesus Christ was equal with God,
but he did not see it as something to use for his own advantage (see Phil. 2:5-11).
He sought only the glory of his Father.

While Adam desired to be great and refused to be God's servant,
grasping instead for the likeness of God,
Jesus Christ made himself nothing and took on the form of a servant
and was made in the likeness of men.

Whereas Adam exalted himself and became disobedient unto death,
Jesus Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

² Col. 1:15; cf. also 2 Cor. 4:4.

And whereas Adam was condemned and disgraced
to the dishonor of God the Father,
Jesus Christ was highly exalted and was given the name of Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus Christ, "**the last Adam**" (1 Cor. 15:45),
came as God to be what man was meant to be.
He came to undo the sin of Adam by his own obedience
and to create a new humanity,
a people redeemed by his death, who would follow him in their lives.
**"And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man,
so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven"** (1 Cor. 15:49).
This is our hope!

And this is our only hope.
We are either enslaved in the sinfulness of Adam by our natural birth,
or we are liberated in the righteousness of Christ by our new birth.
Jesus Christ alone can rescue us from the wrath of God
that rightly stands over all who are in union with Adam.
Jesus Christ alone can reconcile us from the alienation which came
when God justly cast Adam from the garden.
And Jesus Christ alone can renew that divine image
which has been corrupted by Adam's sin.

The good news of the gospel is that this is precisely what he has done!
Jesus "**rescues us from the coming wrath**" (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9).
"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).
We have been delivered from the legal condemnation our sin deserves
and from the moral captivity our sin creates.³

The seriousness of our sinful condition demanded nothing less
than God's saving work in Jesus Christ,
and in **Christ alone**.

**"Salvation is found in no one else,
for there is no other name under heaven given to men
by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12).
**"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
who gave himself as a ransom for all men"** (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

And because our salvation comes through Christ alone,
it also comes to us on the basis of God's **grace alone**—
Jesus Christ is the gift of God to us—
he has done it all for us.

Paul writes in Eph. 2:4-9: "**because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—**

³ cf. e.g., Rom. 6:18.

it is by grace you have been saved.
And God raised us up with Christ
and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
in order that in the coming ages he might show
the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—
and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
not by works, so that no one can boast."

Because our salvation is through Christ alone,
if must be through grace alone,
and because it is by grace alone,
it must be by faith alone—
not by our works, our efforts, our good deeds—
so that no one has any reason to boast.

This is the gospel that was rediscovered by the Reformers of the 16th century.
That's why we are celebrating that great period in the history of the church.
It is the gospel that is captured in the five affirmations
we have been expounding this month—

Sola Scriptura—no merely human word but only God's word
can be relied on to tell us the truth of God's saving work—
Sola Scriptura—Scripture alone is our highest authority.

Solus Christus-- there is no other mediator—not Mary or the saints or the Pope.
Christ alone has accomplished all that was necessary for our salvation—
solus Christus—Christ alone is the only ground of our redemption.

Sola Gratia-- this great salvation is bestowed by God's free grace alone—
Sola Gratia—Grace alone--We contribute nothing to our salvation
but our sin.

Sola Fide-- this saving work of God is received by no other means
than the empty hand of faith—
Sola Fide--Faith alone and no other human action,
is the instrument by which we are saved.

If in this comprehensive sense, salvation is exclusively of the Lord,
it follows that the praise for our salvation is likewise due to him alone.

So the final sola follows--
Soli Deo Gloria—the glory belongs to God alone—
that is the natural outcome of the preceding four *solas*;
It is rightly said that this is the motto that "subsumes all the others."⁴

Soli Deo Gloria—the glory belongs to God alone.

⁴ R.C. Sproul.

This gospel humbles us,
it slays all human pride,
for it leaves us with nothing to boast about.
It is all about God and his grace to us in Christ.
He has done it all.

Reconciliation is the unilateral action of God
in dealing with our sin through Christ.
All we can do is respond in faith,
accepting what he has done in his grace,
and that faith is itself impossible apart from the Spirit's work in us.

There's absolutely no place for self-righteousness,
and when we see others enmeshed in the ravages of sin,
we can only say, "There, but for the grace of God go I."

This fact must sink into our dull skulls--God has done it all.
That is sometimes difficult to accept, even for Christians.
We feel we have to somehow "atone for our sin."
We don't want to face the fact that we do truly owe everything to Him.
It's a humbling experience.

That's why it is said that
"No one who is too proud to be infinitely in debt will ever be a Christian."⁵

That's why Paul says in Eph. 1:11,12,
**"In [Christ] we were also chosen, . . .
in order that we . . . might be for the praise of his glory"** (Eph. 1:11,12).

That's what it's all about—
We are saved through Jesus Christ by God's grace through faith—
"for the praise of his glory"—
That's the very reason we were created in the first place—
to be the image of God in the world—
and so to display his glory.

For what is God's glory but the revelation of himself—
it is his greatness and majesty displayed.
God's glory is the radiant manifestation of the excellency
of his manifold attributes.

God's glory alone, and that of no creature, is the supreme end of all things.

Ultimately, all that God does is for his own glory.⁶
This is the highest end, the *summum bonum*, the final good,
for the glory of God himself is the end for which all things exist.
All creation is to display God's power and majesty,

⁵James Stewart Stewart

⁶In the language of the Old Testament, God redeems a people for himself "to make a name for himself" (1 Chron. 17:21; cf. also, e.g., Ps. 106:7-8; Isa. 48:9-11; Ezek. 20:14; Eph. 1:4-6).

and human beings especially, as those created in his image,
redeemed and being conformed into the image of his Son,
are to reflect his holy and loving character in the world he has made.
As this is done, both individually and corporately, it brings God glory!

The 18th century pastor Jonathan Edwards

makes this point in his inimitable Edwardsian way.

"God's end [his grand purpose] in the creation of the world," he says,
"consists in these two things,

viz. to communicate himself and to glorify himself. . . .

God glorifies himself in communicating himself,

and he communicates himself in glorifying himself.

Jesus Christ, and that as God-man, is the grand medium by which God attains his end,
both in communicating himself to the creatures

and [in] glorifying himself by the creation. . . .

God's design in all the works {of creation} is to glorify his Son,

and through him to glorify himself. . . .

And the principal means by which God glorifies his Son in the world that is created

is by providing him a spouse,

[a spouse] to be presented [to] him in perfect union,

in perfect purity, beauty and glory.⁷

That spouse, that bride, is his church.

God's grand purpose in all of creation is to glorify his Son

by undoing the sin of Adam,

and reclaiming fallen men and women for his Kingdom,

creating a new society, a new humanity --

and the church is to be that new humanity-in-the-making --

the bride in the process of being beautified in holiness,

a new community in which the rule of God's Kingdom

is confessed and lived out in the world.

We must never forget that the gospel is finally not about us

but about God and his glory.

In his wisdom, this gospel is ours by God's grace through faith, not by works,

so that no one can boast (Eph. 2:8-9; cf. 1 Cor. 2:28-29),

and God alone will receive the praise.

One day John's vision will be realized,

and "**every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth**

and on the sea, and all that is in them" will sing:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb

be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13).

We are saved for this very purpose—

to bring glory to God alone.

⁷ "Approaching The End Of God's Grand Design", <http://edwards.yale.edu>, p. 116,117.

But, you might ask, doesn't this leave something out?

Doesn't the Bible tell us that in the beginning
God crowned Adam and Eve with glory and honor?⁸
And isn't it God's purpose that we should share in the glory of Christ,
and that he is bringing "**many sons and daughters to glory**" (Heb. 2:10)?

Couldn't you say that all this talk about all glory belonging to God alone
tends to demean us as human beings?
What about us?
Don't we have some dignity and some value?

Here is where Martin Luther made an important corrective.
Yes, human beings have value and dignity—
but that value is realized in a way that we would not have imagined.

The 62nd of the 95 debating points
that he nailed to the castle church in Wittenberg on All-Saints day, Oct. 31, 1517,
said this:
"The true treasure of the church
is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God."

Luther believed the church of his day
had "exchanged God-given grace for human religiosity."⁹
And that treasure of the gospel
had been lost through what he called a theology of glory.

A theology of glory was Luther's way of describing a man-centered theology—
It was a theology that began with human experience.
It resulted in a rational religion that sought to understand God and his ways
from what we can observe in this world
and from our own moral intuitions.

It affirmed that God will reward our moral striving,
and that God helps those who help themselves.
Sure, there is a place for God's grace—
but that's just the icing on the cake--
the bit that God gives us to get us over the finish line
only after we've done all we can do first.

This theology of glory is what just seems to make sense to us.

But this theology of glory, Luther argued, had the wrong starting point.
We must start, not with our thoughts of God,
but with God's revelation of himself—
and he has revealed himself supremely in the cross of Jesus Christ.

⁸ Heb. 2:7, citing Ps. 8.

⁹ So Vanhoozer, *After Babylon*, p. 40.

The theology of glory is nothing but the world's wisdom.

But listen to the Apostle Paul—

"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Cor. 1:20).

"God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise;

God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—

and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,

so that no one may boast before him" (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

What is this foolish, weak, lowly and despised thing that God has chosen

so that no one can boast before him?

It is the cross of Jesus Christ.

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,

but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus,

who has become for us wisdom from God—

that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

The cross of Christ refutes all our attempts to justify ourselves.

It stands against all our efforts at self-glorification.

And it confounds all our hopes of ever understanding God on our terms.

It can't be done.

It can't be done because the cross of Christ reveals the great mystery of mysteries—

that God's glory is most revealed in this place of greatest shame;

that God's goodness is made known in this place of cruelty;

that God's power is manifest in this place of weakness.

The cross condemns all our human self-righteousness;

and it points us to a righteousness that is all of grace.

That's why a theology of the cross is an assault on our pride.

We glory in what we can accomplish, don't we—

Or maybe I should say,

we glory in the public recognition that comes with those achievements.

This week I thought of this as I attended an awards ceremony

for my grandson who is in kindergarten!

We learn early to seek human praise.

I read recently that there is actually a Hall of Fame for piano tuners—

at the Piano Technicians Guild in Kansas City, KS.¹⁰

We glory in our human achievements, don't we.

But there is no room for human glory at the foot of the cross.

A theology of the cross tells us that only because Jesus humbled himself

and became obedient to death, even death on a cross,

was he exalted to the highest place—

¹⁰ Vanhoozer, p. 40.

to the glory of God the Father.

In his life of faithful obedience to the Father,
and in offering himself in love to the world,
Jesus became the true image of God.
He reflected the character of God in the world, and so brought God glory.

That's it, you see.

The theology of the cross tells us that
our true human glory is found only in a humble submission to the God of all glory.
It is as we take up our cross and follow Christ,
only as his life lives in us by his grace through faith,
only then can we share in the glory that belongs to God alone.

Those who seek to find their lives will lose it,
and those who lose their lives for my sake, Jesus said, will find it.
Blessed are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
The first shall be last and the last shall be first.
Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

The wisdom of the world is turned on its head.

"It is not sufficient for anyone, and it does him no good," Luther wrote,
"to recognize God in his glory and majesty,
unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross."¹¹

The theology of the cross
tells us that only those who do not seek their own glory
will receive glory as a gift from God.

Soli Deo Gloria—glory to God alone.

You see, this is what heaven will be like—
a place where God gets all the glory.
Heaven abounds in worship—
We get a glimpse of that in the visions of John in the Book of Revelation--
**"I looked and heard the voice of many angels,
numbering thousands upon thousands,
and ten thousand times ten thousand.**

**They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.
In a loud voice they sang:
"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"** (Rev. 5:11,12)

¹¹ *Bondage of the Will*, pp. 251f.

and later,

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God" (Rev. 19:1).

All glory belongs to God—that is the great theme of heaven,

but we can bring glory to God here and now in life on this earth—
we can do it as we put our trust in the gospel of his grace,
and we can do it in the way that we live.

Paul speaks this way when he says,

**"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).**

In one sense, we can bring glory to God simply by being truly human—

that is, by being God's image in the world—

and so expressing something of who he is in the world he has made.

We do that whenever we create a new software program,

or think up a new way to manage an office,

or solve a problem at work,

or use our minds to learn new things at school,

or use our bodies to dance or play a sport,

or bring order to a messy house,

or display love to a homeless person--

in any of these ways, we are displaying something of the image of God

and so manifesting his glory.

You can go get out of bed each day,

and say I want to do my work, whatever it may be,

for the glory of God.

The great German Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach

used to place the letters **SDG** at the bottom of his musical scores—

Soli Deo Gloria—as a reminder that his musical ability was a gift from God

that he was returning that gift to him for his glory.

Human excellence in any sphere, enabled by the grace of God,

is meant to radiate the goodness and beauty of God in the world

and to draw others to that glory.

Jesus said, **"let your light shine before others,**

that they may see your good deeds

and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Paul asked, **"What do you have that you did not receive?**

And if you did receive it,

why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

There's no place for boasting,

when we realize that all that we have—both in creation and in redemption—
comes to us by the grace of God.
So to him alone belongs the glory.

SDG—*Soli Deo Gloria*—"glory to God alone"—
by that we are reminded that the gospel recaptured by the Reformation
is not ultimately about us;
it's about God.

The first question in the Westminster Shorter Catechism says it well—
"What is the chief end of man?
To glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

Bringing glory to God brings us joy,
and finding our joy in God brings him glory.

May it be so in our lives.

Prayer—

Closing Song: Invite VOP to come
as we close with an arrangement of Martin Luther's greatest hymn—
inspired by Ps. 46
the words and music written by Luther some time before 1530
in German it is know as "Ein feste Burg"—

immediately popular—
first translated into English in 1539.

It has been called the "Battle Hymn of the [Reformation](#)"

VOP to begin and we will join in—

A Mighty Fortress of Our God --VOP and Congregation

Benediction:

Jude 24,25 To him who is able to keep you from falling
and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—
to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen

The Five *Solas* of the Reformation, #5
Oct. 29, 2017

Celebrating the Reformation: *"Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone"*

Who can be aware of what is happening around us and not believe that there is something wrong with this world. The Bible not only diagnoses the problem; it offers a solution—it is found the gospel of Jesus Christ. God's gospel puts God in his proper place and results in glory to God alone.

I. What's Wrong with the World?

We have not glorified God as God.

*"although they knew God,
they neither glorified him as God
nor gave thanks to him" (Rom. 1:21)*

II. God's Response?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Sola Scriptura: Scripture Alone

Solus Christus: Christ Alone

Sola Gratia: Grace Alone

Sola Fide: Faith Alone

Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone

*"In [Christ] we were also chosen, . . .
in order that we . . . might be
for the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:11,12).*

III. The Reformation Corrective:

Replacing a false "Theology of Glory"
with a true "Theology of the Cross"

*"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do,
do it all for the glory of God" –1 Cor. 10:31*

Discussion Questions:

**Celebrating the Reformation:
"Soli Deo Gloria: Glory to God Alone"**

- According to the Bible, what is the divine diagnosis of what has gone wrong with this world?
- What is the essence of human sin? How does this detract from the glory of God?
- How does the gospel slay human pride?
- How are Adam and Christ contrasted in their relationship to glory?
- What was Luther referring to when he talked about a theology of glory and a theology of the cross? What do you think of his words: "It is not sufficient for anyone, and it does him no good to recognize God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross."¹²
- How do the five "solas" help you to understand the gospel?
- "Bringing glory to God brings us joy, and finding our joy in God brings him glory." What do you think that means in your life?

¹² *Bondage of the Will*, pp. 251f.