

The Five *Solas* of the Reformation, #2

**Celebrating the Reformation:
"Solus Christus: Christ Alone"**

--CEFC 10/8/17

Readings:

Heidelberg Catechism (1563), # 30

Question:

Do those who look for their salvation in saints,
in themselves, or elsewhere
really believe in the only savior Jesus?

Answer:

No.
Although they boast of being his,
by their actions they deny the only savior, Jesus.
Either Jesus is not a perfect savior,
or those who in true faith accept this savior
have in him all they need for their salvation.

EFCA SOF, Art. 5—The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

Heb. 1:1-3; 10:11-18

Phil. 3:7-9

Rom. 3:21-26

"On a sultry day in July of the year 1505
a lonely traveler was trudging over a parched road
on the outskirts of the Saxon village of Stotternheim.
He was a young man, short but sturdy,
and wore the dress of a university student.
As he approached the village, the sky became overcast.
Suddenly there was a shower, then a crashing storm.
A bolt of lightning [pierced] the gloom and knocked the man to the ground.
Struggling to rise, he cried in terror,
"St. Anne help me!
I will become a monk." /

So begins Roland Bainton's acclaimed biography of Martin Luther.¹

He begins with this event because it was a critical turning point in Luther's life,
and it pointed him in a direction that would affect us here today.
This episode represents the pre-Reformation Luther,
a captive to a distorted, medieval understanding of religion.
But by the gracious power of God,
this young man would be liberated by a rediscovery of the gospel of God's grace
grounded in God's act in sending his own Son to be our Savior.

This morning, we continue our series celebrating the great themes of the Reformation
that have been captured by later writers in what are called the **Five Solas**—
with *sola* being the Latin term for "only," or "alone"—
The five great themes of the Reformation are these--

- 1) *Sola Scriptura*—
our ultimate authority is Scripture alone.
- 2) *Solus Christus*—
we are saved on the basis of the work of Christ alone.
- 3) *Sola Gratia*—
we are saved by God's grace alone.
- 4) *Sola Fide*—
we are saved through faith alone.
- 5) *Soli Deo Gloria*—
all this is to the glory of God alone.

This morning, we focus on the second of these-- *Solus Christus*—Christ alone—
We are made right with God by Jesus Christ alone.

So let me return to Luther's story.

At the time of his thunderbolt crisis, he was only 21 years old,
and he appeared to be on the road to some worldly success,
surpassing that of his father.

Owning land was a measure of social and economic status at the time,
and Luther's father own none.

He was a miner by trade.
But he had worked his way up the social ladder
to be the owner of half a dozen factories,
though the family was by no means wealthy.

Luther himself was a bright boy who excelled in school,
so his father ambitiously directed him to the study of law
with the prospect of a prosperous livelihood
enabling the boy to support his parents in their old age.

Young Martin, as the dutiful son,

¹*Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (1950), p. 15.

was on his way back to the university to complete his law degree,
when he had a close encounter with death itself.
When he was struck to the ground,
he was immediately concerned for the fate of his soul.
In that lightening bolt, he felt the horrible heat of the wrath of a holy God.

And notice how he responded,
reflecting the common religious practices of his day—
First, he cried out to St. Anne, the patron saint of miners,
who, Luther believed, had already looked upon his father with favor.
Then he vowed to become a monk—
turning away from the temptations of the world
to devote himself fully to religious devotion.
And in just two weeks, he did,
sending news to his enraged father.

And not just any monk—
Luther joined the strict order of the Augustinians,
with the rigor of prayers seven times a day,
each of which ended with a prayer to the virgin Mary,
the Queen of Heaven, the mother of mercy.
"Be Thou our advocate. Sweet Virgin Mary, pray for us,
thou holy Mother of God."

Luther dedicated himself to the pursuit of holiness—
seeking a higher righteousness by practicing chastity, poverty, obedience,
fasting for days on end, and spending whole nights in prayer,
exceeding the ordinary rules of his order.
He even refused to use a blanket, as a mortification of the flesh,
and he nearly froze to death.
Whatever good works a person might do to save himself,
Luther determined to do.

But all the while, he had his doubts and misgivings—"Have I done enough?
Have I fasted enough?
Am I poor enough?"

"I was good monk," he was to say later,
"and I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that
if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I.
All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out.
If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself
with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work."²

But he had no peace.
He knew he could never achieve the holiness of God himself;
he could never match the standard of righteousness

²Cited in Bainton, p. 34.

that Christ himself set forth in his Sermon the Mount.
"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," Jesus said (Mt. 5:48).

". . . my conscience would not give me certainty," he wrote,
"but I always doubted and said, 'You didn't do that right!
You weren't contrite enough.
You left that out of your confession.'
The more I tried to remedy an uncertain, weak and troubled conscience
with human traditions,
the more I daily found [my conscience]
more uncertain, weaker and more troubled."³ /

But perhaps the church could help—
for the medieval church had come to teach
that she had the power to dispense the accumulated merits
of the saints, the Blessed Virgin and Jesus himself
to ordinary sinners in need of help.
This came in the form of what were called indulgences—
certificates of absolution,
helping a person to pay off the moral debt
they had to pay in purgatory after they died.
These indulgences could be earned by doing certain good deeds,
or they could be bought (as we heard last week),
or they could be given
simply by visiting some of the sacred relics of the saints
distributed throughout Christendom.

The greatest storehouse of such treasures was, of course, in Rome,
which claimed to possess, among other things,
a piece of Moses' burning bush,
the chains of St. Paul,
a coin paid to Judas to betray our Lord,
a multitude of fragments of the cross of Christ,
and thousands upon thousands of the bones of the martyrs.
Just viewing one of these relics could cut millennia from your time in purgatory.

So Luther made a pilgrimage to Rome,
hoping to absorb the holiness of that holy city,
by visiting the various holy sites.

He even crawled up the steps that were said to have been brought from Jerusalem
and which Jesus himself was said to have climbed when he stood before Pilate.
Luther repeated the Lord's Prayer at each step and kissed it to seal his devotion.

But he was shocked by the ecclesiastical depravity he found in Rome—
the sexual immorality of the clergy,
the priestly flippancy in performing the mass,

³Cited in McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, p. 94.

the commercialization of religion—
it was more than he could bear.
In the end, Luther left Rome disillusioned and despairing,
even less certain of his standing before God.

In the teaching of the church, our salvation had become a joint affair—
Christ does his work, and we do ours--
and Luther knew that his contribution would always fall short.

He could not escape the sense of alienation from God that gripped him—
He was tormented in his spirit,
fearing the wrath of God upon his life./

But as a theology professor at Wittenberg University
Luther was tasked with expounding the Scriptures—and this he did.
In 1513 he lectured on the Psalms,
and there he wrestled with the opening verse of Psalm 22—
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
These, of course, were the words Jesus spoke as he hung on the cross.

Luther could well understand that sense of rejection and desperation before God—
That's how he felt—
he knew himself to be a sinful man,
weak, impure, a slave to his own self-serving desires.
But Jesus—he was not weak or impure—
he was the Holy One of God.
How could he have experienced such forsakenness?

Luther realized that it could only be that Jesus, the divine Son of God,
was taking on himself our alienation, our forsakenness.
He was bearing our sin on the cross.

The royal Judge of the living and the dead had come off his throne
and had made himself subject to judgment.
He has come to suffer with those who stood condemned,
and when he rose from the grave, his justification was ours also.

What a wonder!
What a mystery!

Luther's view of God was transformed—
He now saw that the all-holy One was also the God of mercy.

But Luther's transformation was not complete.
He still struggled with what it means to speak of the righteousness of God.
How could God be just while justifying the ungodly?

It was in his study of Paul's letter to the Romans that gospel light finally shone through.

I quoted the decisive breakthrough last week—

"I had greatly longed to understand Paul's letter to the Romans," Luther wrote,
"and nothing stood in the way but that one expression 'the righteousness of God,'
because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous
and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous. ...
Night and day I pondered until ... I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God
is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy,
he justifies us by faith.

Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn
and to have gone through open doors into paradise.
The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning,
and whereas before 'the righteousness of God' had filled me with hate,
now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love.
This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven.
If you have a true faith that Christ is your Saviour,
then at once you have a gracious God,
for faith leads you in and opens up God's heart and will,
that you should see pure grace and overflowing love.
This it is to behold God in faith
that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart
in which there is no anger nor ungraciousness.
He who sees God as angry does not see him rightly but looks only on a curtain,
as if a dark cloud had been drawn across his face."⁴

It was a rediscovery of the gospel of Jesus Christ—
God in his love and grace has acted decisively and with finality to redeem us.
God himself has done everything that needs to be done to set us right before him.
In giving us his Son Jesus, God gives us his righteousness as a gift.

In one of Luther's hymns this gospel truth is proclaimed:

In devil's dungeon chained I lay
The pangs of death swept o'er me.
My sin devoured me night and day
In which my mother bore me.
My anguish ever grew more rife,
I took no pleasure in my life
And sin had made me crazy.

Then was the Father troubled sore
To see me ever languish.
The Everlasting Pity swore
To save me from my anguish.
He turned to me his father heart
And chose himself a bitter part
His Dearest did it cost him.

⁴Cited in Bainton, pp. 49,50. (see *Luther's Works*, vol. 34, pp. 336-38.)

Thus spoke the Son, "Hold thou to me,
 From now on thou wilt make it.
I gave my very life for thee
 And for thee I will stake it.
For I am thine and thou art mine,
And where I am our lives entwine,
 The Old Fiend cannot shake it.

From calling upon St. Anne and vowing to become a monk,
 and from the treasury of merits of the church,
Luther now looked to Jesus Christ, and him alone,
 as the full and complete source of his righteousness before God.
Solus Christus—Christ alone.
 He alone saves us from our sins—
 He alone brings us into a loving relationship with our heavenly Father.
Not the merits of the virgin Mary or the saints,
 not the various rituals of the church,
 not the good deeds that we perform,
 not even the fervency of our faith—
No—we are justified—declared right with God—
 by Jesus Christ and him alone.

This was the real lightening bolt that shook not just Martin Luther,
 but the world.

So what is the basis for such a claim—
 that there is no other name by which we must be saved—
 that there is only one mediator between God and man,
 that Jesus Christ and he alone who can bring us to the Father?

I want to focus on two central realities that support this gospel truth.

The first is the supremacy of Christ's person.

We can affirm Christ alone as the ground of our salvation
 because Christ alone is God come in the flesh.
There is none like him.

The author of Hebrews writes in the opening words of his letter:

**"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets
 at many times and in various ways,
 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,
whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.
The Son is the radiance of God's glory
 and the exact representation of his being,
 sustaining all things by his powerful word" (1:1,2).**

Do you see the contrast?—

The difference between Jesus and all the prophets God has used in the past
is not just a matter of degree,
but a fundamental difference in kind.

They were mere servants of God,
Jesus came as God's own Son.

He is the supreme revelation of the Father—
the very "**radiance of God's glory**
and the exact representation of his being"--
there could be nothing higher, nothing greater.

John, in his Gospel, says the same thing—

"In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1).

"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" (1:14).

"No one has ever seen God,
but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side,
has made him known" (1:18).

Matthew tells us, this one born to the virgin is **Immanuel, God with us** (1:23).

And Paul affirms this exalted view of Jesus as well—

"[God] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
The Son [that is, Jesus Christ]
is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things were created by him and for him.
He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
And he is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead,
so that in everything he might have the supremacy.
For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether things on earth or things in heaven,
by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col. 1:13-20)

The Gospels set before our eyes one like no other--

"To know Him is to know God (Jn. 19:7);
to see Him is to see God (Jn 12:45; 19:9);
to believe in Him is to believe in God (Jn 12:44; 19:1);
to receive Him is to receive God (Mk. 9:37);
to hate Him is to hate God (Jn 15:23);

and to honour Him is to honour God (Jn 5:23)."⁵

"Instinctively," wrote Carnegie Simpson, "we do not class Him with others.
When one reads His name in a list beginning with Confucius
and ending with Goethe we feel it is an offence
less against orthodoxy
than against decency.

Jesus is not one of the group of the world's great.
Talk about Alexander the Great and Charles the Great and Napoleon the Great if you will.
. . . Jesus is apart.

He is not the Great; he is the Only.

He is simply Jesus. Nothing could add to that. . . .

There is a saying . . .

that 'if Shakespeare was to come into this room

we should all rise up to meet him,

but if that Person was to come into it,

we should all fall down

and try to kiss the hem of His garment."⁶

Who is Moses,

who are the prophets of the Old Testament,

who is Mary or the apostles or all the saints of the past

compared this One—

Jesus Christ, the very Son of God?

Solus Christus—we are justified before God by Christ Alone
because Christ alone is Immanuel, God with us.

And it is only this understanding of who Jesus is
that allows us to appreciate what he has done.

We affirm Christ alone not only because of the supremacy of his person,
but also because of the sufficiency of his work.
Christ alone is our sufficient Savior—
nothing can be added to what he has done for us.

I refer you again to that opening passage in Hebrews—

1:3—"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,
sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After he had provided purification for sins,

he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

He "sat down"—that is significant—

and the significance of that is picked up in chap. 10, in the passage we read earlier.

There the author is contrasting the Old Testament priests

with Jesus, our great and ultimate High Priest.

⁵ So Stott, *Basic Christianity*, p. 26.

⁶ Cited in Stott, *Basic Christianity*, pp. 34f.

10:11--"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties;
again and again he offers the same sacrifices,
which can never take away sins.
But when this priest [that is, Jesus] **had offered** for all time one sacrifice for sins,
he sat down at the right hand of God. . . .
because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever
those who are being made holy."

The priests in the temple never sat down in the performance of their duties.
This is a token of the fact that those duties were never complete;
they were never fully and finally effective.

The image I think of here is of a busy homemaker--
always scrambling to wash the clothes, cook dinner, clean the dishes
and get the kids to bed,
and as soon as she finishes, she starts all over again.
It is a never-ending job--
there is never a moment of ultimate completion, of finality.
She is constantly standing, performing her duty.

"**But,**" v. 12, "**when this priest** [that is Jesus]
had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins,
he sat down at the right hand of God.
because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever
those who are being made holy."

It's done, he says.

The job is complete.

The work is finished.

That one sacrifice has made us perfect and continues to do so—it is forever.

By that one sacrifice we are made perfect—

that is, we are perfectly qualified

to come into the presence of God as his worshippers.

That is what Jesus' one sacrifice of himself has done for us—

to all those whom he "**makes holy**."

Yes, we are being made holy by Christ's one sacrifice,

but Hebrews also affirms that through it we are already made holy.

in v. 10--

"**we have been made holy**

through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Our consciences have been purified;

we have been washed clean.

Nothing now prevents us from coming into God's holy presence.

Jesus died for us once and once only--

He didn't need to nor does he

continue to offer himself over and over again.

He has offered himself *once*--
and that was all that was needed--
for that offering was fully effective.
It was final.

It brings about the forgiveness of our sins--
and those sins are taken away--
it is as if God himself has forgotten them.

It is as if he has erased them from your "permanent record."
Do you remember that from school?

There was always the threat that if you did something really bad
it would appear on your "permanent record."
That was held over your head as a menacing threat—
because, if something got on your "permanent record,"
why, it was permanent.
You could never get rid of it.
It was etched into stone,
and it would follow you wherever you went till the day you died!

But here God says in v. 17,

"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

Because of this once and for all, ultimately effective sacrifice of Christ
that permanent record of our sins—past, present and future—
has been washed away—burned up.
It's gone--forever.

There is no need for any more sacrifices,
for we are now forgiven, washed clean
by that one sacrifice offered once for all.
That's what makes us perfect before God forever.
That's why, in the New Testament, Christians—all Christians—
are now called "saints"—"holy ones"—
those fit to come into the presence of holy God.

Because Jesus is our perfect high priest—
the New Testament has no place for "priests"
who somehow mediate our relationship with God.

We have one priest—
instead, we are together a royal priesthood—
together proclaiming the glories of the gospel to the world.

That, my friends, is the good news of the gospel which we proclaim.

That is it--

God has acted in his Son Jesus Christ
to save us for himself.

He has provided the one sacrifice that alone is effective
in making us right with him.

No other sacrifices are necessary--

nor are any other sacrifices possible--
for none could any equal what Jesus alone could provide.
He alone could offer a perfect life,
perfectly conformed to the will of his Father in heaven.
He alone is that perfect lamb of God who takes away sins.
Nothing less would be sufficient,
but that is just what he has done for us.

You see, the righteousness of God is the righteousness he gives us—
When we turn to Jesus in faith, we are clothed with his righteousness.

In Phil 3:9 we read that Paul's confidence before God comes in being "**found in [Christ],
not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law,
but that which is through faith in Christ—
the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith**"

The righteousness we have is not our own, though our own obedience to the law.

Luther referred to this as a "passive righteousness"—
it is passive as far as we are concerned,
for we can only receive it as a gift.

He also called it an "alien righteousness"—
because it comes to us from the outside—
it is ours in virtue of being joined to Christ by faith.

It is reckoned to our account,
it is *imputed* to us, and not somehow *infused* into us.
For in justification, God declares us righteous,
he does not *make* us righteous--
at least, not in the sense of our suddenly becoming virtuous in ourselves.

Our justification and our sanctification—
that is, our inner transformation to become more like Christ—
these are two distinct matters--
one takes place in a moment,
the other progresses over a lifetime and beyond,
though neither can these two be separated.
A person is not declared righteous, or justified,
without also being profoundly changed on the inside,

But this distinction between being declared righteous and being made righteous,
between an imputed and an imparted righteousness, is crucial.

Our assurance of acceptance by God,
and the very grace of God toward us, hangs on it.
And this distinction was a major difference between the Reformers of the 16th century
and the Roman Catholic Church at the time,
and this distinction still has important dimensions today./

But let me emphasize that this declaration of God
that we are righteous in his sight
based solely on the work of Christ is no **legal fiction**--
as if God were pretending something were true when it really isn't.

Our justification by God is a legal reality of the utmost significance--
it is as real as a declaration that a certain child is legally adopted.
In one sense the child is not the real, biological child of his or her parents,
but the legal declaration of adoption gives to that child
all the real benefits of being so,
and it gives to the child a new legal status in that family.

Luther also liked to use the analogy of a marriage.

Our justification is as real as the new possessions that a husband or wife gains
when they get married.
When they are joined in holy matrimony,
what had belonged to one of them, now in fact belongs to them both.
And so when we are joined to Christ in faith,
what is his becomes ours
and what is ours becomes his.

2Cor. 5:21--"**God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,
so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**"

Luther referred to this as a "wonderful exchange"—
he takes our sin and we receive his righteousness.

Again, as Paul puts it in Rom. 3:22—
**"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
There is no difference,
for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
and are justified freely by his grace
through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (3:22-24).**

Solus Christus—it is all of Christ.
He has done it all.

When you understand the gospel in this way,
then it becomes ludicrous to think that we could add anything to it.

Paul speaks this way to the Christians of Galatia
who had come to believe that they had to join Jewish law-keeping
to their faith in Christ to be right with God.

Gal. 3:1—"You foolish Galatians!
Who has bewitched you?
Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. . . .
Are you so foolish?"

**After beginning with the Spirit,
are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?"**

That's always the danger, isn't it—
that we, in our pride,
think that we have to contribute something to our own salvation.
The thought creeps into our heads that the sacrifice of the Son of God for our sin
is somehow not enough.

I know what that's like--

Oh, I know it in my head--
I can rattle off the right doctrinal formulation.
But sometimes I don't get it in my heart.

I forget the grace of God in the gospel
and begin to think of my own contribution to this process.
I am lulled to sleep and take my eyes off Jesus,
and I fall into a moralistic religion--
thinking that my obedience to the rules, my good deeds,
my spiritual exercises are somehow necessary
to make me right with God.

I get on that religious roller coaster--
with its ups and downs--
and its constant reminder of sins.

There's nothing wrong with a reminder of sins
when that reminder of sins simply turns us back
to God's grace in the cross of Christ,
so that we can be assured that that sin is covered by his bloody sacrifice.

But that's just what I forget.
I think I have to cover it myself, with my own good deeds,
with my own religious sacrifices.

"It is the supreme art of the devil," Luther wrote,
"that he can make the law out of the gospel."⁷

Every day I have wake up to the truth of the gospel;
I have to get it into my head
that God doesn't need my sacrifices for sin--
he already has the sacrifice which he provided himself--
the sacrifice of Christ once for all.
How can that not be enough?

What am I thinking—
that I can add to what Christ has done for me?
How foolish can I be!

⁷*Table Talk*, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 53, p. 98.

Being a Christian is not a matter of being religious--
it is a matter of being thankful--
thankful for what God has done for us through his Son Jesus Christ.

The sacrifice he now wants from us
is the sacrifice of praise,
the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
the sacrifice of a life offered up to him
in response to his goodness and grace.

That's what pleases him.

That's why we must constantly be coming back to the cross—
Jesus, the very Son of God, pouring out his life to save us,
to make us right with a holy God.

Rom. 5:8—"God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

That's why Paul says,
"May I never boast
except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14)./

Solus Christus—Christ alone.

The truth of Christ alone
affirms that the grace of God does not come to us
through Mary or through the saints,
nor is it somehow magically bestowed through some rituals of the church,
No, it comes to us in Christ and him alone—
God has acted in history through his Son to save us.
Why should we look anywhere else?

Moses didn't die for me;
nor did Buddha,
nor Mohammed.
Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man./

You could say that all the *solas* of the Reformation really flow out of this one.

The truth of Christ alone implies grace alone, which we'll talk about next week—
For if God in Christ has done it all,
all we can do is receive his righteousness as a gift.
Our good deeds can add nothing
to the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice of our divine Savior.
It can only be received with empty hands, by faith alone

The truth of Christ alone helps us to see
that our faith is not something that merits God's approval of us,
our faith is not some righteous act for which we can take credit.

No, faith only looks to Christ—
he and he alone is the ground of our salvation.

Our faith is not some mystical mood that we have to conjure up.
When you have doubts, don't look within yourself for your faith,
No, look outside yourself to Christ—
and gaze upon him crucified and risen from the grave—
He is the one who saves us, not our faith.

The truth of Christ alone
is what keeps us coming back to the Bible—
for he is the key to the Scripture—it all points to him,
even as he pointed to it as the place where we could find him.
That's why we affirm Scripture alone.

And the truth of Christ alone
ensures that it is the true God that we seek and serve
and it is to this living, triune God and to him alone
that belongs all the glory.

Jesus Christ is the gospel—Jesus Christ alone.
That's what Luther rediscovered—
for that's what the Bible teaches.

Do you see it?

Stop looking anywhere but to Christ—
In Christ are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge" (Col. 2:3);
and in Christ we are blessed with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1:3);
in Christ we become sons and daughters of God,
for he alone as our representative and substitute,
shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins.
His atoning death and victorious resurrection
constitute the only ground for salvation.
It is Christ alone.

Prayer—

Closing Song: *In Christ Alone*

**"In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;**

Benediction:

"May you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.”

The Five *Solas* of the Reformation, #2
Oct. 8, 2017

Celebrating the Reformation: "Solus Christus: Christ Alone"

If "Scripture alone" as our highest authority is the formal principle of the Reformation, justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is its material principle. The gospel declares that we dare not rely on anything in ourselves or anything outside ourselves apart from *Jesus Christ alone* to make us right with God.

I. The Rediscovering of the Gospel

Solus Christus—

We are made right with God by Christ Alone

II. The Supremacy of the Person of Christ

III. The Sufficiency of the Work of Christ

Two Dangers—

A. The intrusion of our works

B. The diminishment of Christ's Cross

Solus Christus—The Center of the Five *Solas*

Discussion Questions:

**Celebrating the Reformation:
"Solus Christus: Christ Alone"**

- What do people commonly trust in to make them acceptable to God? Why is this inadequate?
- Why is it significant that Jesus "sat down" after he had offered himself as a sacrifice for sin?
- Why is it important that we affirm the supremacy of Christ's person in today's pluralistic climate?
- What difference does it make that Jesus is the "perfect, all-sufficient" sacrifice for our sins? How can we deny that in our lives?
- Why does Luther speak of the righteousness of God that justifies us before God as being a "passive" righteousness, an "alien" righteousness, and an "imputed" righteousness? What is the difference between being "declared" righteous and being "made" righteous? How does this impact our assurance of salvation?
- Why is it significant that the New Testament doesn't speak of the office of "priest" in the church, but that it describes believers together as "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9)?

"In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought
and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of
peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings
cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of
Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll
stand."

