

Solus Christus

November 19, 2017

There are some things so fundamental that without them those things fall apart. For example—

- Without water, you can have no life.
- Without a football, you can have no football.
- Without a road, you can have no roadtrip.
- Without a melody, you can have no music.

It makes sense right?

With no progression of notes, no tune to hum you would have no music. Melody is fundamental to music.

The Reformers discovered that Christ alone is fundamental to the Scriptures. Without Christ alone you would have no reformation, you would have no core Biblical message, you would have no eternal life.

You might say that Christ Alone (Solus Christus in Latin) is the tune of the Reformation.

500 years ago the Reformers rediscovered this lost tune of the Bible that was largely overlooked and overshadowed and forgotten. They read the Bible and listened to what it said they heard the song of Christ. You might say for the first time in a long time the word of God was given a voice and the song of truth began again to be sung.

The Reformation was a rediscovery of the message of the Bible tuned to Jesus Christ. That old song of Jesus Christ that was forgotten was rediscovered.

The tune and the truth was so beautiful that many heard and began to sing along. We are still singing today. And that is why the Reformation still matters—

The words of the song come from scripture and scripture alone.

And from scripture they heard—

The soul-stirring song of Salvation (and all else in a Christian's life is) is fueled by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the Glory of God Alone.

Grace Alone

Faith Alone

Christ Alone

To the Glory of God Alone

I shudder to give priority of one formulation over another but today—I believe—we talk about the most important of all of them.

Solus Christus.

Christ alone is fundamental. Christ is the melody of the scriptures. This is what the Reformers rediscovered.

Grace

Faith

Glory

ALL depend fundamentally on Christ and Christ alone.

All of those are important but none of them make sense without Christ alone. Let me show you—Grace alone does not exist if not for Christ alone. Faith alone makes no sense if not for Christ alone. There is no possibility to bring glory to God alone without Christ alone.

Christ alone binds together the logic of the 5 Solas and all of scripture. Without Christ alone we would have no experience of grace. Without Christ we would have no experience of faith. Without Christ we would be unable to bring glory to God.

Christ and Christ alone is most important person in your life. Christ and Christ alone is the crying need for everyone in your life. Christ and Christ alone is the need of our nation and the need of all nations. Christ and Christ alone is the jewel of heaven and most precious of all gifts to mankind. Christ and Christ alone is the treasure of heaven freely given to a bankrupt world.

And the danger for most of us is that we think—“Yup, I’ve checked that box. I became a Christian in 2008 or 1997 or 1983 or 1979 or 1967...” And Christ the melody of the scriptures is a tune we can’t sing anymore. We who have been around church can say that we believe in Christ but he doesn’t really make much of a difference in our lives.

If I were to express my goal for this morning it is simply this:

PROP: Believe & keep believing in Christ alone.

Whether you know Jesus or whether you don’t—the charge is the same for all of us. Believe and keep believing in Christ alone.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

PROP: Believe & keep believing in Christ alone.

God so loved that he gave—

Whoever believes lives—

1. God loved and gave—

This sentence tucked away in John 3, might be one of the most famous sentences in the English language. If you have grown up in church you are probably able to recite it.

But much of the truth is obscured by familiarity. The logic of this verse (which summarizes a famous conversation with Nicodemus) is important.

‘For God so loved the World...’

God looked down at his world, not in anger but in love. You do not understand the logic of the gospel if you do not first understand the God of love.

But God SO loved the world. He wanted better for the people of his world. I’m not sure what you think of God—you might see him as an angry and spiteful primed and ready to dash out lightning bolts at the smallest infraction.

But that misses the point by a wide margin.

God SO loved the world.

We find God’s love in a place where we would expect to find God’s anger. Mankind rebelled and rejected God personally, specifically, repeatedly and instead of anger—we hear that God SO loved the world.

That is surprising.

If you were the creator of your own universe complete with a miniature grouping of people and they rebelled against you—you would destroy those ungrateful leches. God takes all sin personally, because all sin is first and foremost against him.

And yet God SO loved.

How do you respond when someone does or says something against you?

Get angry. That is normal. If someone comes up and punches you in the face you are going to take that personally.

What do we do to enemies?

We get revenge.

Blockbuster movies and classic tales center around stories of revenge. By all rights, God deserved to take revenge, but his attitude toward his world was love.

When John says that he so loved the world he is not talking about the land, sky, oceans and atmosphere. He is talking about the people in the world.

And yet, God so loved the world.

When you begin to see love God has for his people, you begin to hear the tune of the the gospel of Christ. Love and not anger gives us the logic and melody of the good news.

It is popular to think that God is angry and Jesus is a calming force—rubbing out his anger toward mankind. Rather, God SO loved.

God so loved the world that he gave his ONLY Son.

He gave his enemies his best.

He gave his only Son.

Love impelled God to action. God gave his ONLY Son. And in giving his only son, he emptied heaven of the son of Glory. Christ, the treasure of eternity was ransaked. God

emptied the vast treasury of heaven to ransom a bankrupt world.

God did this because he loved the world and there was no other way.

If there were, he would have done that.

God loved the world, but he also loved his son. How to choose? It seems as if God has greater love for the world than he did for his son.

God sent his son away.

God gave his only son.

God acted toward his Son in a way that seemed contrary to the love he had for him from the beginning.

But there was no other way for mankind to have eternal life, no other way for mankind to be with God than to have God become man.

If there was another way to deal with the rebellion of mankind—by divine fiat or some such proclamation—he would have done it that way.

But God loved the world and he wanted them to have eternal life and not be condemned to eternal death. So he gave his only son.

Or to put it the way we have been talking about—God gave Christ alone because in Christ alone could the world be saved.

God is generous. Before he gave his son he gave other gifts that spoke of his goodness.

God had given a created order—

Creation continually speaks and sings of the glories of God, but mankind did not take any notice. Man saw the

roving beasts and the glimmering stars and worshiped them and not the one that created them.

But God gave the people more than just the handiwork of creation—He gave leaders, heroes, judges, kings, priests and prophets.

God gave—

Leaders—Leaders like Moses. He was a mighty leader who led the people from slavery to Egypt but he could not lead them from slavery to sin.

God gave—

Heroes—Heroes like Joshua. He was a great hero that refused to be cowed by the giants in the land but despite all his heroism he could not save the people from themselves.

God gave—

Judges—Judges like Samuel. He heard from God and annointed the greatest king of Israel but even this judge lacked the wisdom to give to people the words of life.

God gave—

Kings—Kings like David who was a man after God's own heart, but this greatest of king was still just a man who had a heart that continually strayed.

God gave—

Priests—Priests like Aaron who directed the Hebrew sacrifices for sin but all of those sacrifices did nothing to erase the stain go sin.

God gave—

Prophets—Prophets like Isaiah who saw the heavenly throne room and was commissioned by God himself but the people did not listen to this messenger from God.

God needed to give a dying world someone else. The best Leaders, Heroes, judges, kings, priests and prophets could not give the people eternal life.

Further, even the best Leaders, Heroes, judges, kings, priests and prophets that God gave....died.

Not only did they die, but even the best of them failed in some rather drastic ways.

God gave them but did not stop with them.

- The best leader could not lead men and women to eternal life.
- The greatest hero could not vanquish death.
- The wisest of judges lacked the wisdom to outwit the consequences of sin.
- The most regal king did not free the people from the shackles of guilt.
- The holiest priest could not wipe away the shame of sin.
- The greatest prophet was not the word of life.

So God gave his only son.

Why? Why did he give his only son? What does the verse say?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Why? Any who believe Christ alone might have life.

2. *Whoever Believes, lives*

The camera angle goes from the World at large to the individual person. God loved the world—that whoever believes.

In other words, he zooms in on you and me.

Believes what?

John just says, ‘in him.’

What does that mean?

It means any who believes in Christ alone—all he is and all he has done has eternal life. It is not enough to just believe in some of the things he teaches or some teaching here and there. You must believe that Christ alone is the one who can give eternal life.

To believe in him means you believe in him most of all and even over yourself. To trust yourself over and against Jesus is a sin that goes by many names—

Wise in your own eyes

Foolishness

Selfishness

To believe in him means you believe that Christ alone has obeyed because you were unable to.

To believe in him means you believe that Christ alone is wisdom—not you.

To believe in him means you believe that Christ alone got what you deserved and you don’t want what you deserve.

Not only is does belief in him exclude trust of yourself it also excludes trust in anything else.

To believe in him means you believe there are not many ways to God, but only one in Christ alone. Christ is not merely a way to be saved but Christ alone is the way of salvation.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

God so loved the world that he gave Christ alone the exclusive way of salvation. Had God not sent Christ in love to this world, there would be no escape. All of humanity would be sentenced to eternal death.

There would be no escape.

Christ alone could make a way to eternal life.

There was no other way.

There is no other way.

There will never be another way.

This means that any religious system that encourages you to believe in anyone or anything other than Christ and Christ alone is false. There is no other way.

Any religious system that says you need to perform this or that religious practice to be saved is false. Believing in Christ alone is the the way to eternal life.

You might be thinking that I am narrow-minded and hopelessly outdated. Two thoughts for you—

1. I am merely reporting what Jesus and the Bible say at every turn. It is unambiguous.

“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12

The scriptures may not conform to modern standards of truth but they consistently present Christ alone as the only way to life.

Notice also that even this verse does not say that we can believe however and in whoever we want but in Christ and Christ alone for eternal life.

The other reason this is not blinkering narrow-mindedness is because of a little word in verse 16—

2. 'Whoever'

Whoever believes in Christ alone will inherit eternal life and flee eternal death. Whoever means anyone can believe in Christ alone and be enjoy eternal life.

Whoever carries no exclusions.

Whoever allows no exceptions.

Whoever allows no partiality.

Whoever puts up with no rejections.

Whoever allows no exemptions

Whoever means whoever.

Whoever is a word you shout from the mountaintop inviting with out execption any and all to come and embrace Jesus Christ and the eternal life he gives.

Anyone from anwyhere no matter what you have done can believe in Christ alone and have eternal life. This teaching is the opposite of narrow mindedness because whoever can come.

This means—

If whoever means whoever that means you too. That is key here. God so loved the world (plural—everyone) that whoever (singular—you)—it means you have to chose. He

came to world and each one of us must decide what do to with him.

We are not qualified for eternal life because of religious heritage. As I've heard, "God has no grandchildren. Only sons and daughters."

This means that kids who have grown up in and around church cannot inherit new life because your parents know Jesus.

This means that even if you feel marked by guilt because you qualify as whoever you can have eternal life. This means even if you live with shame, because you qualify as whoever you can have eternal life. This means even if you don't feel like you fit in, because you are are a whoever you can have eternal life.

Do you feel guilty?

- Was it something you did?
- Was it something you didn't do?
- Is it something you can't stop doing?
- Is it for the past?
- Is it for the present?

Those feelings of guilt are real. We are all guilty. But those feelings of guilt does not disqualify us from believing in Christ and Christ alone.

Whoever believes in Christ alone—even those who feel guilty—may have eternal life.

Do you carry shame?

- Was it for something done to you?
- Is it for because you always feel out of place?
- Is it because you have never measured up?

We have a lot to be ashamed of but that sense of shame does not disqualify us from believing in Christ and Christ alone.

Whoever believes in Christ alone—even those who feel ashamed—may have eternal life.

Do you feel unworthy?

You might be sitting in here today thinking thoughts like—

- Everyone here is so put together, I don't fit.
- If people really knew me, they would reject me.
- They all look so holy.
- They all know so much.

We are all unworthy but that does not disqualify us from believing in Christ and Christ alone.

Whoever believes in Christ alone—even those who feel ashamed—may have eternal life.

You might ask—how much do I have to believe?

How much does the verse say we have to believe in order to have eternal life?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

How much does it say?

Four cups worth?

Nine units?

Six bushels?

How much do I have to believe in order to gain eternal life?

The verse does not speak in terms of the amount of our faith, just the reality of our faith in Christ alone. It is a grave mistake when we focus on how much we believe in Jesus instead of focusing on Christ alone.

The best way to become discouraged, depressed and otherwise disillusioned is to focus on the amount of faith you have in Christ alone. Let's be real.

None of us believe as we should in Christ alone.

None of us believe enough in Christ alone.

But if we believe in Christ alone it is enough.

False teachers ask you to focus on your faith and encourage you to have faith in your faith. Or challenge you to whip up your faith—but not by looking at Jesus by just trying to believe.

That kind of teaching will shipwreck your soul.

The Bible invites you to see Jesus and remind you that you can't trust him too much.

As you focus on Christ alone—who he is—what he has done your faith in him will grow. Mature Christians are mature precisely because they do not focus on their faith instead of Christ.

Christ alone saves those who believe in him—even if they have just a little bit of faith.

You might ask, “How long do I believe?”

The verse could be rendered,

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes (and continues to believe) in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

That means belief is not an act in the past but an action every day in our lives. Trusting in Christ is less a matter of a decision made in the past and more a daily decision to continue believing in Christ alone.

Many people fall away for many different reasons—those who continue to believe have eternal life.

How do you know if you continue to believe?

Often it is a matter of holding on.

As the trials of life pound like the rising tide against you and you continue to believe in Christ alone—you are holding on.

As you fight against sin and patterns of sin by going again and again to Christ alone—you are holding on.

As you are tempted to live a double life or harbor malice toward others but expose those things to others and Christ alone—you are holding on.

As you fall ill but don't fall away but continue to believe in Christ and Christ alone—you are holding on.

As you endure hardship, catastrophe, disappointment and continue to believe in Christ and Christ alone—you are holding on.

As you grope for what it means to be a follower of Jesus even when your kids grow up and move out and continue to believe in Christ and Christ alone—you are holding on.

Have you continued to believe in Christ alone?

It is worth asking that question. There are no guarantees outside of Christ for salvation. You cannot rest on—

Spiritual heritage

Theological knowledge

Being a good person

Church attendance

God in Christ has done all for us because he loves us and all we do is believe in Christ and have the gift of eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Lets review—

What does this mean?

Any can believe in Christ alone and inherit eternal life.

All must continue to believe—do you?

PRAY

Benediction:

[13] May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13 (ESV)

