

Theme: Scripture teaches we are saved on account of God's grace alone, through the work of Christ alone, which is accessed by faith alone, so that the glory for our salvation might be to God alone.

I. Intro - Johann Sebastian Bach

- A. Bach - 1685-1750; one of greatest composers
- B. Wrote a large number of both secular and spiritual works
- C. He has had a huge influence and is recognized as one of the greatest composers and musical geniuses ever
- D. Steve Jobs - hear Bach played by Yo Yo Ma is "the best argument I've ever heard for the existence of God, because I don't really believe a human alone can do this."
- E. Bach wrote SDG - Soli Deo Gloria - on his compositions
- F. Is glory to God alone biblical? Why is it important?

II. The Five Sola's

- A. Sola Scriptura - Scripture alone as the final rule of faith
Thus **you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.** ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ **They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.**" Matthew 15:6-9
 - 1. The final rule of faith and practice is Scripture alone
 - 2. While tradition, creeds, and confessions are valuable they are not equal to Scripture, and are in fact to be judged by Scripture
 - 3. If we do not state Scripture ALONE, inevitably the

other authorities trump Scripture in practice

- 4. The end result of this is our worship becomes empty and vain
- 5. Scripture is not only necessary - it is sufficient
- B. The Nexus of salvation - Sola **Gratia**, **Christus**, **Fide**
Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**, ² through whom we have gained access **by faith** into this **grace** in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2
 - 1. We are justified by grace alone - God's unmerited kindness, mercy and favor, not anything we do
 - 2. God's grace is offered to us in Christ alone - not through our efforts or those of any other saint or the church
 - 3. We access God's grace offered to us in Christ by faith alone - not by faith plus our works
 - 4. In all of these our works are the antithesis of how God saves
 - 5. Grace, Christ, faith are not only necessary - they are sufficient
- C. This all leads to the glory of God!
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of **the glory of God**. Romans 5:1-2
 - 1. The outcome of all of this is the glory of God
 - 2. This is all aimed at bringing glory to God - not us!

III. Soli Deo Gloria - Glory To God Alone

A. The Gospel excludes human boasting

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of **faith**.²⁸ For we maintain that a man is justified by **faith apart from observing the law**.²⁹ Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by **faith** and the uncircumcised through that same **faith**.³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this **faith**? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law. Romans 3:27–31

1. Paul has described the Gospel in great detail
2. We now see the purpose - exclude human boasting
3. This is why it is by faith - 5 times!
4. Faith - apart from keeping God's law - our works
5. This is faith ALONE!
6. We can not boast - because we are not saved by our works

B. The Gospel that saves us gives all glory to God alone

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are,²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.³⁰ 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.³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:26–31

1. God did not choose us because of something in us - we were weak, foolish, lowly (vv26-28)
2. God did this so that no one could boast (v29)
3. Our salvation is because of God placing us in Christ, who is our righteousness (v30)
4. The only thing we can do is boast in God - give Him the glory (v31)
5. This is the same message as Ephesians 2:8-9
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —⁹ not by works, **so that no one can boast**. Ephesians 2:8–9

C. Soli Deo Gloria - at the heart of the Reformation

1. The medieval church system of salvation split the glory between God and humans
 - a. The traditions of the church were equal to Scripture
 - b. God's grace gave a push, but humans had to work to earn their own salvation
 - c. Christ was the most important part of salvation, but saints and Mary added their merit as well
 - d. Faith was important, but had to be completed by works
 - e. In this system God is necessary - but not sufficient
2. The Reformation recovered the Biblical teachings regarding salvation, which gave the glory to God alone
3. This is enshrined in numerous ways in Reformation teaching and practice
 - a. Luther - a dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God

- b. Westminster shorter catechism question 1
What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever
- c. Bach - all my labors are Soli Deo Gloria!

IV. Applying the Word - Recovering Soli Deo Gloria Today

- A. Very often today we hear a man centered Gospel. We are at the center, and God is at the periphery, there to meet our needs
"I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God—I mean, that's one way to look at it—we're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy. So, I want you to know this morning: Just do good for your own self. Do good because God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?" (The congregation applauds.) - Co-pastor of largest evangelical congregation in America
- B. The true gospel puts God at the center —because that's the truth. We live and die in a God-centered universe.
- C. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. Romans 11:33–36

- D. Our chief problem today is that God is no longer weighty (the root meaning of Hebrew word for glory). Instead He is virtually weightless, while humans are weighty.
- E. The great need of our day is to proclaim God in all His Sovereign majesty and glory. This is always offensive to unregenerate humans - but it is the only message that saves those same unregenerate humans!
- F. To put humans and our wants at the center is ultimately destructive. In aiming for our own happiness rather than the glory of God we miss both. But if we aim for God's glory, we find our own deepest joy.
- G. Help a modern reformation
 1. Believe this true Gospel and refuse the false, man centered Gospel
 2. Only go to a local church and support ministries that teach the true Gospel
- H. A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Soli Deo Gloria - Glory To God Alone

Romans 3:27-31

May 14, 2017

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Jude 1:24-25

Teaching keywords: God's glory; Gospel; saving grace

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy —
²⁵ to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 1:24–25

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