

Thoughts on Grace

- Most of you have heard of the Protestant Reformation. Cutting an extremely long story short, nearly 500 years ago a Roman Catholic Monk named Martin Luther disagreed with the Catholic Church's claim of singular authority to interpret Scripture and apostolic succession (among other things).
- On October 31, 1517, it is commonly held that Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, Germany, and sparked the Reformation in which we now minister.
- Out of the Reformation, Luther and other godly men after him established what became known as the "Five Solas:" (Sola is Latin for "alone.")

1. "**Sola Scriptura**": *Scripture Alone*. The Bible alone is the sole authority for all matters of faith and practice. Scripture and Scripture alone is the standard by which all teachings and doctrines of the church must be measured. As Martin Luther so eloquently stated when asked to recant on his teachings, "Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen."

2. "**Sola Gratia**": *Salvation by Grace Alone*. Salvation is by God's grace alone and that we are rescued from His wrath by His grace alone. God's grace in Christ is not merely necessary, but is the sole efficient cause of salvation. This grace is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

3. "**Sola Fide**": *Salvation by Faith Alone*. Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. It is by faith in Christ that His righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

4. "**Solo Christo**": *In Christ Alone*. Salvation is found in Christ alone and that His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to God the Father. The gospel has not been preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared, and if faith in Christ and His work is not solicited.

5. "**Soli Deo Gloria**": *For the Glory of God Alone*. Salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God for His glory alone. We Christians must glorify Him always and must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God, and for His glory alone.

- As the website gotquestions.org put it (a good site BTW), "*Sola gratia*" is simply acknowledging that the Bible teaches that the totality of our salvation is a gift of grace from God."

ζ *Rom 3:23-25 ESV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.*

ζ *Eph 2:4-9 ESV But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8)*

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- As many of you have heard taught in the past, God's grace is simply His loving willingness to extend to us "unmerited favor" through Christ that we might be free from the power of sin! As Pastor John Piper put it, "*Grace is the pleasure of God to magnify the worth of God by giving sinners the right and power to delight in God without obscuring the glory of God.*"

Solas information obtained from; www.gotquestions.org