



## **Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda!**

*The Five Solas, Now more than Ever!*

October 31, 2021

### **Holy Texts to Meditate Upon:**

- **Psalms 119:1-16 (KJV)** *Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. 2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3 They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. 5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! 6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. 7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments. 8 I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly. 9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 12 Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. 13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. 14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. 16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.*
- **Psalms 119:30-33 (KJV)** *I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. 31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. 32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.*
- **Psalms 119:47-48 (KJV)** *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.*
- **Psalms 119:66 (KJV)** *Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.*
- **Psalms 119:105 (KJV)** *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

### **The Church Reformed: A Declaration of Christ's Sovereignty!**

1. The first part of our thought today, *Ecclesia Reformata*, is roughly, "The Church Reformed" in Latin.
2. For us, The Church Reformed isn't a particular brand of doctrine; it is a faith statement, a biblical proclamation, a declaration of purpose!
3. Voddie Baucham once taught that "to reform something is to continually take it back to its biblically intended purpose."
4. *Ecclesia Refomata*, to us, means just that. It is to declare that the church must be built as the LORD of the Church, Jesus Christ, has commanded!
5. It is a declaration of biblical truth and humble but passionate intent: that we are and must be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph 2:20)!
6. We cannot simply "make up church." God has decreed what He wants:
  - **1 Timothy 3:14-16 (KJV)** *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, **that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.** 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

- **2 Timothy 1:12-15 (KJV)** *For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. **13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.** **14** That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. **15** This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*
- **2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 (KJV)** *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: **14** Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. **15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.** **16** Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, **17** Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

Recommend this message as a further review: <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2020/7/rebuilding-our-church-pt-4-built-upon-the-apostolic-pattern-and-an-eternal-perspective>

### **Always Reforming: An Admission of Man's Sinfulness!**

1. *Semper Reformanda* is Latin for "always reforming."
2. One author wrote, "*semper reformanda* corresponded to the Reformed principle of *solā Scriptura*, or Scripture alone. When Jodocus Van Lodenstein penned the phrase in 1674 (he was a minister in the Netherlands), it was not about adjustments and improvements to the church's doctrine, worship, or government. Nor was *semper reformanda* a call to be innovative or relevant. *Semper reformanda* calls the Church to continually focus back on that which lasts forever—God's Word (*Isaiah 40:8*; *1 Peter 1:24–25*)."<sup>1</sup>
3. I've recently learned of this sort of Reformation happening within the African Church even prior to its explosion in Europe! God is always calling his people back to the Scriptures!
4. To declare *Semper Reformanda* to us is to declare our guilt, our sinful proclivities, our tendency to elevate man's ideas, thoughts, wants, wishes, and feelings over the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God!
5. In other words, because of our tendency to rebel, the habit of continual self-examination according to Scripture must be implemented.
6. God's Word is perfect; we are not:
  - **Psalms 19:7-9 (KJV)** *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*
  - **Romans 3:23 (KJV)** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
  - **Jeremiah 6:19 (KJV)** *Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/semper-reformanda.html>

- **Jeremiah 7:24 (KJV)** *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.*
- **Jeremiah 32:33 (KJV)** *And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.*

For more, please review: <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2021/2/continuing-conflict-continuing-grace-pt-7-mans-word-or-gods-word>

### **The Heart and Mindset of the Reformation!**

1. In my opinion, the heart and mindset of the Reformation is about two things. **The first is love!** Love for God with all of one's heart mind soul and strength. Love for others desiring to love them biblically. A love and passion for the Word of God and a desire to see Scripture as Sufficient.
2. **The second is humility!** It is an understanding that “God is” and we “are not.” It is a heartfelt acknowledgment of the power and sovereignty of God and our need to be teachable!
  - **Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV)** *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
  - **Isaiah 46:9-10 (KJV)** *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*
  - **Isaiah 55:11 (KJV)** *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*
  - **Romans 8:28 (KJV)** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*
3. **I believe that such a heart and mindset of love and humility will translate not only to temporal blessings, but also to increased honor and reverence towards the LORD.**
4. For us, striving for continual Reformation isn't about looking or sounding smart. It's not about trying to distinguish ourselves from other churches. It's not about form nor fashion or trying to be hip or trendy.
5. **Embracing Reformation principles is about worship! It's about adoration! It's about faithfulness! It's about holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD! (Heb 12:14) It's about the Gospel of Jesus Christ!**
6. It's about understanding that our God is a “consuming fire” and is to be served acceptably with reverence and godly fear! (Heb 12:28-29)
7. Just look at the heart that shines forth from our initial Texts!
  - A heart that loves God and seeks Him fully! (Ps 119:2, 10)
  - A heart that desires to be taught by God! (Ps 119:12, 33, 66)
  - A heart that rejoices in the Word! (Ps 119:14)
  - A heart that hungers for biblical holiness! (Ps 119: 9, 11)
  - A heart that chooses obedience! (Ps 119: 30)
  - A heart that delights in God's Commandments! (Ps 119:47-48)
  - A heart that trusts and desires to live by the Scriptures (Ps 119:105)

Amen!

### **The Five Solas**

On October 31, 1517, the Catholic monk Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of a castle in Wittenburg, Germany in an attempt to start a public debate. For centuries prior, the Scriptures were the purview of the bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. People had little access to them. Luther had discovered how far the Church had veered away from her biblical moorings and desired change. (See also Abba Estifanos of Ethiopia some 70 years prior.)

*Sola* is Latin for “only” or “alone.” For the protestant reformers of the 16th century, the Five Solas served as correctives for what was perceived the as false doctrines and excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. They were not put together in a group like this until much later, but were taught and defended from the 16th century until this day.

There are many “reformers” who would contribute to this mindset: men like William Tyndale, John Calvin, and John Knox, etc. The Puritan era would also significantly promulgate the ideas found in the Reformation through the writings and preaching of leaders like John Owen, Thomas Watson, Jonathan Edwards, Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, Matthew Henry, and many others. Pastors like Charles Spurgeon, and J.C. Ryle helped things along in 19th century. The Five Solas are:

1. *Sola Scriptura*: “Scripture alone”
2. *Sola Gratia*: “Grace alone”
3. *Sola Fide*: “Faith alone”
4. *Solo Christo*: “Christ alone”
5. *Soli Deo gloria*: “to the glory of God alone”

And we need them more than ever!

### **Sola Scriptura!**

This Sola declares that the Bible alone is the highest source of authority for Christians. Everything else—traditions of men, other writings, preferences—must be judged in light of Scripture. Once historic confession writes it this way:

The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 1689 London Baptist Confession

Scripture says:

- **2 Timothy 3:14-17 (KJV)** *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*
- **2 Peter 1:19-21 (KJV)** *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

### **Sola Gratia!**

This Sola declares that we are saved by grace alone! Man, in his fallen condition since the fall, is wholly incapable of pleasing God on his own.

- **Psalms 14:1-3 (KJV)** *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

In order for man to be saved, or justified before a Holy God, God Himself must extend salvific benefit we do not deserve. This unmerited favor is called grace!

- **Ephesians 2:4-8 (KJV)** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*
- **Romans 3:23-24 (KJV)** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

### **Sola Fide!**

This Sola declares we are saved by faith alone! In other words, we are not saved by works. Our own goodness and good works are not enough. Church attendance, ordinances, giving, or serving the poor are all good things. Indeed, faith without works is dead! (Jam 2:20) They, however, cannot save us!

- **Romans 5:1-2 (KJV)** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
- **Galatians 2:16 (KJV)** *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*
- **Galatians 3:22-24 (KJV)** *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23 But before faith came, we were*

kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. **24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

- **Galatians 2:20 (KJV)** *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

### **Solo Christo (Solus Christus)!**

This Sola declares that we are saved by Christ alone! He alone is our propitiatory passover lamb, His stripes and blood being sufficient to pay our sin debt!

- **Acts 4:10-12 (KJV)** *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. **11** This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. **12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
- **1 John 4:9-10 (KJV)** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. **10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*
- **1 Peter 2:24 (KJV)** *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*
- **1 Timothy 2:5-6 (KJV)** *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; **6** Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*
- **John 14:6 (KJV)** *Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***

### **Soli Deo Gloria!**

This Sola declares that we are saved for and should live the Glory of God alone! One website wrote, "It is affirmed that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone."<sup>3</sup> God purposed us, created us, sustains us, saves us, and will glorify us!

- **Romans 6:23 (KJV)** *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- **John 15:5 (KJV)** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*
- **Revelation 4:11 (KJV)** *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*
- **1 Corinthians 10:31 (KJV)** *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

### **Now more than ever: Applying the Five Solas**

1. Rejoice! The Heart, Mindset, and Declarations of *The Church Reformed, the Church Always Reforming* should cause the heart to leap with praise! We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone! We live for the glory of God alone!

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theopedia.com/five-solas>

2. See Scripture as sufficient! See the Bible as the lens, by the Spirit, through which all life must be viewed. Read it. Study it. Meditate upon it. Memorize it. Pray it. Come to hear it preached! Teach your children what it says!
3. Love the Lord thy God deeply! Ask the Holy Spirit renew your first love. Allow this love to permeate every part of your life. Repent quickly. Forgive others. Serve the church. Work hard. Do things unto the glory of God, to the praise of the One who saved you by grace through faith!
4. Allow such love to foster new and fresh obedience! Ask the LORD renew your vision concerning His glorious plan of redemption in Christ, and to be newly inspired to walk in the newness of life!
5. Preach the Gospel! God has provided the only means of escape from His rightful and coming wrath. He has done so through the suffering of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. He provided such atonement for a rebellious and stiff-necked people. He did so because He loves us and has saved us by His grace and through faith He Himself bestowed! Tell others! Shout it from the rooftops! Jesus saves!

Amen!