

Sola Fide: Faith Alone

Romans 4:1-8

(black Bibles page 941; Children's Bibles page 1403)

Series Introduction

The Reformation is 500 years old this year!

What are the "five solas" of the Reformation? *Sola Fide* (faith alone), *Sola Gratia* (grace alone), *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone).

- These are statements about doctrine/theology, but they also are statements about life!

Q1: What does sola ("alone" or "only") convey?

A1: "Let's not make this unnecessarily complicated..."

Q2: Wait, how can there be five only's? That makes no sense.

A2: They simply answer five separate questions about salvation and life:

- How do I receive God's forgiveness and salvation? By faith alone.
- But what is the source of this salvation? God's grace alone.
- But how did God's grace accomplish my salvation? Through Christ alone.
- By what authority do I know these things are true and how to live by them? By Scripture alone.
- Who deserves glory for all this? Glory to God alone.

Need a picture? Consider a beggar, finding exactly the nobleman he believes will help him...

Faith Alone

Out of the five solas, this is the one that is about us! We are **justified** by **faith alone**.

1: "Alone"

Do our good works matter? Not in this conversation! Only faith does.

- Our passage: Romans 4:1-8. See verse 5 especially.
- So faith includes an awareness of our incompleteness, our neediness. That is why it is like a beggar reaching out. (And he's not impressed by his own reaching out, is he?)
- To think about: Why aren't we justified by love? Why faith?

"Alone" also means don't complicate the picture with other people, like priests, saints, etc. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus..." 1 Tim. 2:15

2: "Faith" (= belief; trust)

- True belief. The object of faith is important. What if the centurion had such faith in Pilate to heal. That would be misplaced faith!
- Personal trust. Do you trust God's character and intentions towards you?

3: "Justification"

This means "acceptance" by faith alone. This is how God accepts us.

- But justification is more than mere 'acceptance'. It is a legal acceptance. God is the Judge. This is amazing because we're guilty, legally speaking. It seems impossible!
- Jesus said the tax collector in the temple was "justified" (Luke 18:14)
- Justification is a legal term. It is a declaration that we are righteous, and not a transformative process, it's not about your growth or sanctification, as important as that is in other ways.

Question about application: Is there anything to do here?