

Sola Scriptura

Hebrews 4:1-13

Introduction

Martin Luther said that the doctrine of justification by grace, through faith, in Christ alone is the Pillar of the church. And on Reformation Day, in two weeks, we're going to talk about that. But where do we find this doctrine? Did Luther make it up? Or one of the church fathers? Did it come from a church council? No, we find it in Scripture, the Word of God. If the doctrine of justification is the pillar of the church and Christ is the Cornerstone, the Word is the foundation. And so, we say, "*Sola Scriptura*—the Bible is our sole authority for living."

Scripture: The Word of God

Of course, the first question people ask is, "How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?" This question is worth answering, because if the Bible is not the Word of God, it is not valid as an authority for living. If it is the Word of God, it must be our only authority.

It Says So

We read in **Daniel chapter 9**: *In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years (Daniel 9:2)*. Daniel is talking about Jeremiah's prophecy of the end of the Babylonian captivity in **Jeremiah 29:10**. Jeremiah received the Word of the Lord and wrote it down. St. Paul says in **Romans chapter 3**, *To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God (Romans 3:2)*. Paul refers to all the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) as the oracles or word of God. (Read **2 Peter 3:15-16**) Peter equates the writings of Paul with the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bible says of itself that it is the Word of God.

Believe It

But the world says that internal evidence is not proof. Just look at the Internet. Anyone can write anything, claiming any authority they choose. But that doesn't make it true. The fact is, it's a step of faith to believe the Bible is what it says it is.

Faith in God

Notice, I didn't say, "believe *in* the Bible." We don't believe in the Bible. We believe the Bible because we believe in God. We believe in God because He has given us the faith to do so. Our answer then is, "I believe in God. Therefore, I believe His Word." The catch is, you can't say you believe the Bible if you only believe it *contains* the Word of God. Then, you believe what you want to believe and interpret the Bible accordingly.

Living and Active

Paul says the Word of God is *living and active (v. 12)*. It's different from any other word because it's the Word of God. God's Word has power—the power to create or destroy, to heal or kill, to forgive or judge.

Two-edged Sword

Some people like to call the Bible “God’s love letter.” Paul says it’s *sharper than any two-edged sword*. Some of the church fathers saw the two edges as the Old Testament and New Testament. Or you could say they are Law and Gospel. What matters here is the sharpness, the cutting power of Scripture. This love letter cuts because God’s love cuts. It was love that sent Jesus to the cross. Love is all about forgiveness. Forgiveness begins with an offense that needs forgiven. Then that offense is judged. The offender repents. Love forgives.

Cuts to the Heart

To work repentance in us, the Word of God cuts to the heart. This isn’t a shallow paper cut that doesn’t draw blood. This cut *divides soul and spirit, joint and marrow*. It gets past words to the *thoughts and intentions of the heart*. This is the real reason why people don’t want to believe God’s Word, or they try to change it to fit their lifestyle. It cuts too deep. But just as a surgeon’s cuts bring about physical healing, God’s Word cuts to work eternal, spiritual healing.

The Word: Sole Authority

So, what does it mean that the Bible is our sole authority?

Filter for Life

First, it’s our filter for life. Everything that happens in life, everything that happens to us, everything we read, everything we see or hear is interpreted through Scripture. Because God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow, what He said is true yesterday, today, and tomorrow. So, what we believed yesterday, we believe today, and will believe tomorrow.

No Apologies

We can live life with no apologies. If we’re following what God says in His Word, we have nothing to apologize for. This may sound arrogant, but Davey Crockett said, “Be sure you’re right, then go ahead.” If we’re following God’s Word, we can be sure we’re right. We can say with Martin Luther, “Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen.”

Means of Grace

The Word of God is alive and active, imparting God’s grace to us. He has chosen it to be His means of grace. When the Word is applied to the water of Baptism or the bread and wine of Communion, they become means of grace, as well. In them, the Word cuts to the heart, forgiving our sins and strengthening our faith. The Word of God is our sole authority for living.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
