

Historical and Theological Contours of the Reformation

CLASS 9: SOLUS CHRISTUS/SOLI DEO GLORIA

NOVEMBER 26, 2017

Solus Christus – “Christ Alone”

1. “Christ Alone” ... for what?
2. Why should we study “Christ Alone” more deeply?
 - Is it mere intellectual musings for the “professional theologian”?
 - or does it impact the “every-day Christian”? If so, how?

Solus Christus

- Christ stands at the **centre** of the “solas” – how?
 - Sola Scriptura
 - Sola Gratia
 - Sola Fide
 - Soli Deo Gloria



Romans 3:23-25a

Solus Christus



Sola Gratia



Sola Fide

Solus Christus

- Major contention during Reformation re: Christ
 - Not so much the NATURE of Christ
 - But the WORK of Christ
- Nature of Christ
 - Divinity + Humanity of Christ
 - Settled during earlier Church councils
 - Council of Nicea, Council of Chalcedon
- Work of Christ
 - What exactly did He do as it relates to our salvation?
 - necessarily flows from the nature of Christ

Solus Christus

- Christ's WORK in relation to our salvation
 - John 14:6; Acts 4:12
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:5
- Jesus Christ is the ONLY fitting priest/mediator between wicked sinners and a holy God
- Why do we need a mediator?
 - Rom. 3:23, 6:23
 - "...Jesus comes to sinners who can in no wise come to God, to those for whom the undifferentiated presence of God is the silence of his abandonment, the wrath of his handing them over to the just deserts of their godlessness." - Hinlicky

Solus Christus

- “Competing mediators” at the time of the Reformation
 - Veneration of saints
 - The Pope and catholic priests
 - The Virgin Mary
 - Indulgences, relics
 - The 7 sacraments
 - Purgatory
- Christus - yes; but SOLUS Christus in actuality?
 - what are examples of “competing mediators” today?

Solus Christus

- “instruct the faithful diligently concerning the intercession and invocation of saints; the honour (paid) to relics; and the legitimate use of images: teaching them, that the saints, who reign together with Christ, offer up their own prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, (and) help for obtaining benefits from God, through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our alone Redeemer and Saviour...
- ... but that they think impiously,
 - who deny that the saints, who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, are to be invocated;
 - or who assert either that they do not pray for men;
 - or, that the invocation of them to pray for each of us even in particular, is idolatry;
 - or, that it is repugnant to the word of God; and is opposed to the honour of the one mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus;

Solus Christus

- or, that it is foolish to supplicate, vocally, or mentally, those who reign in heaven;
- or, that the holy bodies of holy martyrs, and of others now living with Christ, which bodies were the living members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, and which are by Him to be raised unto eternal life, and to be glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful; through which (bodies) many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honour are not due to the relics of saints;
- or, that these, and other sacred monuments, are uselessly honoured by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the saints are in vain visited with the view of obtaining their aid;
- **are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and now also condemns them.”** - XXV, Council of Trent

Solus Christus

- 3 crucial inter-related concepts:
 1. Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA)
 2. Infusion vs. Imputation
 3. Alien righteousness vs. Proper righteousness

Solus Christus

- Review of the “order of salvation”

REGENERATION

God’s giving of new spiritual life to us by the Spirit - “raising the dead”



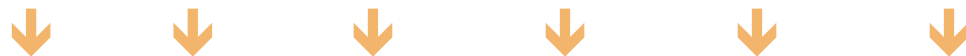
FAITH – our response to God’s gift of life (though faith itself is also God’s gift)



JUSTIFICATION – God’s declaration of “not guilty” upon sinners (legal pardon)



SANCTIFICATION – our co-operation with the Spirit in becoming holy



GLORIFICATION – our final deliverance from all sin and ungodliness

1. Penal Substitution

- How exactly did Christ procure our salvation?
 - Atonement (“at-one”) theories:
 - Ransom Theory
 - Recapitulation Theory
 - Satisfaction Theory
 - **Penal Substitution Theory (dominant reformed view)**
 - Moral Exemplar/Influence Theory
 - Governmental Theory
 - Christus Victor (related to Ransom Theory)
 - ...

1. Penal Substitution

- 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13
 - Christ stood in the place of sinners, as a **substitute**, receiving the just **penalty** of sin on behalf of sinners
- Rom. 3:23-25
 - in this, the just wrath that God held against sinners was satisfied (**propitiation**)
- Phil. 3:9-11
 - trusting (**by faith**) in Christ's work on behalf of him/her, each sinner is united with Christ and His righteousness; not only do we share in His death, we will also share in His resurrection

2. Infusion vs. Imputation

- **Justification by Infusion** (RC understanding)
 - Christ's righteousness infused into you & changes you
 - Baptism = spiritual rebirth; at baptism, sin is completely removed from you and grace is infused into you – “state of grace”
 - You are fundamentally changed from unrighteous to righteous
 - Subsequent participation in the sacraments (esp. penance) is essential in order to preserve one's “state of grace”

2. Infusion vs. Imputation

- “Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the **sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification.** The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as **“the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.”** - 1446, CCC
- “If anyone says, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity that is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and is inherent in them; or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favor of God: **let him be anathema.**” – XI, Trent

2. Infusion vs. Imputation

- **Justification by Imputation** (reformed understanding)
 - Righteousness imputed upon you but doesn't change you
 - Luther's famous "*simul iustus et peccator*"
 - simultaneously just and sinful (unacceptable to RC doctrine)
 - 2 Cor. 5:21 – the sweet exchange at the Cross
 - humanity's sins *imputed* upon Christ; his righteousness *imputed* upon sinners
 - of course, this is only "realized" for any given individual via faith
 - Promise-faith-imputation dynamic is not new in God's dealings with humanity
 - eg. Gen. 15:6, Num. 13-14

2. Infusion vs. Imputation



VS.



2. Infusion vs. Imputation

- Why does it matter? Is it just semantics?
 - Why does it matter for you and I that we've been justified via the process of imputation and not infusion?
 1. Our standing before God depends on it
 - RCs – one is justified through baptism, but one's standing is preserved through our participation in the sacraments
 - Prots – we're utterly helpless in saving ourselves, therefore we need someone else to definitively save us (and keep us saved)
 2. Consequently, our confidence/assurance of salvation
 - RCs – can one really have security?
 - Prots – we have absolute confidence, since our justification rests not on our “helping ourselves” (albeit with God's help), but on the objective reality of Christ's sufficient, completed work

Intermission

- **Solus Christus** – Jesus Christ = **ONLY** fitting mediator between wicked sinners and a holy God
- **Justification** as PSA (Penal Substitutionary Atonement)
 - Christ took the place of us sinners, as a **substitute**, taking on the **penalty** due us, thus **satisfying God's wrath** against sinners
- **Justification** by Infusion vs. Imputation
 - Infusion – baptism removes our sins (thus far), **making us righteous so we can do righteous things meritoriously**
 - Imputation – Christ's righteousness **credited** to us

■ “Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, **but human nature has not been totally corrupted**: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin - an inclination to evil that is called ‘concupiscence’. **Baptism**, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, **erases original sin and turns a man back towards God**, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.” – 405, CCC

■ “Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion. Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, **we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life.**” – 2010, CCC

3. Alien vs. Proper Righteousness

■ Alien Righteousness

- Righteousness OUTSIDE of us, “imputed” upon us
 - “The first [kind of righteousness] is alien righteousness, that is the righteousness of **another, instilled from without**. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies through faith” - Luther
- my only fitting response is to receive, NOT grasp/work

■ Proper Righteousness

- Righteous living resulting from alien righteousness
 - “The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness, not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness.” – Luther

3. Alien vs. Proper Righteousness

- Alien righteousness = Justification (legal pardon)
- Proper righteousness = Sanctification (becoming holy)
- while these two aspects of our life in Christ must co-exist, they are nonetheless distinct from one another and must remain so
- RCs' formulation of "justification" mixes alien with proper righteousness
 - "Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man" – VI, VII, Trent
 - Reiterated in the Catechisms of the Catholic Church

3. Alien vs. Proper Righteousness

■ **Legalism**

- erroneous emphasis on obedience that makes rule-following an addition to Christ as the mediator between us and God
 - The situation in Rome - penance, indulgences, saints ... etc.
 - “Christ + _____”
- **here, sanctification swallows up justification**
- how do you spot legalism in your own life?
 - what happens when you sin? Do you despair and “try to clean yourself up first”, or do you run to Christ in repentance?
 - do you have a tendency to look for what’s wrong in other peoples’ lives and judge them (Luke 18:9-13)?

3. Alien vs. Proper Righteousness

■ **Antinomianism**

- Since we've been justified, we have the Christian liberty to do whatever we want
- more subtle version: "Let go and let God"
 - stop trying so hard to live a godly life!
 - when you sin, just "look to Christ" and remember how horribly helpless you are, but you don't need to try, ever!
- biblically indefensible (what about biblical imperatives?)
- **here, justification swallows up sanctification**
- how do you spot antinomianism in you life?
 - a lackadaisical/casual attitude towards sin

Solus Christus & Sola Fide

- we are justified by Christ's righteousness alone
 - not "Christ + our faith"
 - "BY" Christ = "on the grounds of" Christ
 - "BY" faith = "through the instrument of" faith
 - The substance of faith
 - **our faith ≠ "contribution" to our being justified**
 - the empty hand that receives the saving Christ
 - the giving up of everything about us that may help save us
 - faith ≠ work (Eph.2:8-9)

Solus Christus & Works

- In summary, justification means...
 - RCs – faith in Christ alone to erase our sins, causing us to do good works which preserve our standing before God
 - Prots – faith alone in Christ alone, our works having ZERO justifying value
- The role of works for the Protestant
 - absolutely necessary (as the **reflection** of true, saving faith)
 - “It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone.” - Calvin
 - “Idle faith is not justifying faith.” - Luther (commentary on Gal.)
 - Gal. 5:6; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 12:14
 - book of James – critique of “idle/dead faith”

Soli Deo Gloria – Glory to God Alone

1. What is God’s “glory”?
2. How do we “give glory to God”?
3. Where “Soli Deo Gloria” is not upheld, what kinds of issues may arise in such a church?
 - Can you think of contemporary examples in Christian circles where “Soli Deo Gloria” is not upheld?

Soli Deo Gloria

- God's glory stands as **THE goal** of all the "solas"
 - Sola Scriptura
 - Sola Gratia
 - Sola Fide
 - Solus Christus



Soli Deo Gloria

This doctrine reminds us that nothing that we do is ultimately about us (and that includes all our spiritual practices: our worship, our praise, our service, our prayer, our offering, our faith, our theology...)

Rather, it is ultimately all about God, and none other.

Psalm 115:1

Soli Deo Gloria

- God's glory
 - manifestation of God's perfections in creation - Grudem



Soli Deo Gloria

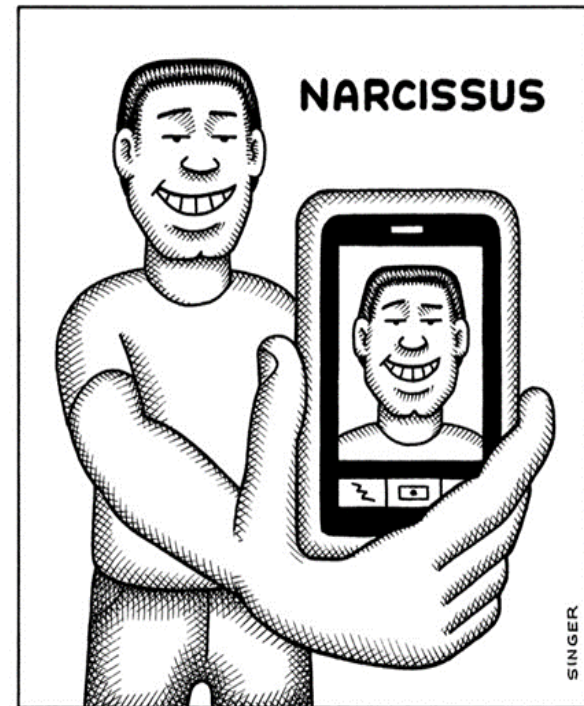
- But ... while all of creation is meant to reflect His glory, the most definitive demonstration of God's glory is His Son
 - Jn. 1:14,18, Col. 1:15-17, Heb. 1:3
 - the astonishing surprise is that God's glory is ultimately demonstrated through the path of humility/suffering
 - seen throughout Jesus' life
 - reaches climax at the Cross

Soli Deo Gloria

- What is the relationship between God's glory and us?
 - God expects that all creation "give glory to Him"
 - Isa. 43:6-7
 - 1 Cor. 10:31
 - Ps. 96:1-3
 - Ps. 19:1-3
 - "What is the chief end of man?"
 - Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."
 - Westminster Shorter Catechism Q1

Soli Deo Gloria

- So ... is God a narcissist?
 - Isa. 42:8
 - His glory = our joy
 - “The really wonderful moments of joy in this world are not the moments of self-satisfaction, but self-forgetfulness. Standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon and contemplating your own greatness is pathological. At such moments we are made for a magnificent joy that comes from outside ourselves.” – Piper



Soli Deo Gloria

- “Competing gods” at the time of Reformation
 - “...that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them; not that any divinity, or virtue, is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or, that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent; in such wise that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head, and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ; and we venerate the saints, whose similitude they bear: ... But if anyone shall teach, or entertain sentiments, contrary to these decrees; let him be anathema.” – XXV, Trent
- Exod. 20:4-6; 32:1-5

How do we give glory to God?

Soli Deo Gloria - Applications

1. since God's glory = manifestations of His perfections in creation, then creation "gives glory to God" simply by living out its design, ie. being good stewards of God's good gifts to us
 - eg. a flower gives God's glory by being a beautiful flower
 - eg. "God made me fast; and when I run I feel His pleasure."
– Eric Liddell
 - What does it mean for you to be good stewards of God's good gifts to you?
 - How will you encourage a brother/sister this week to steward his/her gifts well for God's glory rather than their own?

Soli Deo Gloria - Applications

2. Yet, since human beings are fallen, our attempt to live out our design is tainted by sin ... therefore, in order to glorify God, we must be freed from the enslavement to sin
 - Since freedom from sin is possible only through Christ, we glorify God by placing our trust in Christ, not simply as a one-time event when we first believed, but we also live out this trust in the daily process of repentance and faith
 - This point has vast implications on evangelism/missions
 - ie. God is glorified when fallen sinners place their trust in Christ
 - what does it mean as you contemplate the glory of God amongst your unbelieving classmates/roommates/family/friends/colleagues?

Soli Deo Gloria - Applications

3. Because all of creation exists to reflect God's glory, whatever good we see in it (including in ourselves) should redound to God's glory
 - so the natural and fitting response to “good things” is worship
 - while “all of life is worship”, this point specifically refers to the carving aside of time to sing to God, to praise God, to pray to God, to reflect on His greatness, to read and respond to His Word ... etc.
 - “The fact that worship is an immensely unproductive activity from an earthy perspective provides helpful reminder that *Soli Deo Gloria* is really not about [us]” - VanDrunen

Soli Deo Gloria - Applications

4. Our union with Christ necessitates us to imitate our Saviour. And if Christ glorifies the Father through the path of humility/suffering, so do His followers
- not that we “look for” trouble, but trouble does find us
 - What is your attitude in humbling circumstances, in trials and adversities?
 - How do we think of sacrificial suffering for the sake of others?
 - How should we think about the “prosperity gospel” (a true misnomer!)?

Soli Deo Gloria

- What does it mean to “give glory to God **alone**”?
 - Helpful to ask the question in another way...
 - how do I sometimes “rob God of His glory”?
 - Rather than being reflectors of God’s glory, we take something that is good/great/beautiful and attribute glory to self/others
 - is your heart more preoccupied with pride or with thankfulness?
 - Does your life point to God, or does it point to yourself?
 - Do people look at your life and see how great you are, or do they see how great your God is?

Soli Deo Gloria



VS.

