



The Five Solas: Sola Scriptura

Reformation Prelude, Part 4

David Sunday

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Jesus, You are Lord, and You have the words of eternal life. No one else does. We're here today because Your words are true, eternal, life-giving and full of hope and mercy. We're here today because Your words have called us into a relationship with You. We're here today because You came to fulfill the word—the covenant—that You and the Father made from before the foundation of the earth to redeem a sinful people for Yourself. I thank You, Lord, that no one is here by accident today. I pray for anyone who has not yet seen Your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, that You would shine into their hearts through the Word today, revealing Yourself to them as a God Who saves and a God Who gave a Savior for them personally. I pray that You would cause us all to feast more fully on the abundance You've given us in Your Word as we hear it preached today. I ask for the empowerment of Your Holy Spirit on my preaching and upon our hearing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Sola Scriptura. We don't usually speak Latin in this church, but because the month of October represents the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation—which started on October 31, 1517—we're going to do a series of sermons on Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, In Christ Alone, To the Glory of God Alone. These are the "Five Solas" of the Reformation. The word *sola* means "alone." R.C. Sproul has said, "It is no exaggeration to say that the eye of the Reformation tornado was that one little word *sola*—alone."

I don't think the meaning of Sola Scriptura could be better expressed than the prophet Isaiah has done in Isaiah 8:20. People are saying, "Go to mediums. Go to spiritists. Go to people who whisper and mutter to get guidance." Isaiah responds, "No! Don't go there." He says (NLT), "*Look to God's instructions and teachings. People who contradict his word are completely in the dark.*" Or in the English Standard Version: "*To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.*" That's a great Old Testament description of Sola Scriptura.

Take your Bible in your hands and realize that you're holding the most valuable thing this world affords. When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned on June 2, 1953, the moderator of the

Church of Scotland presented her with a copy of the Bible, saying to her, “Here is wisdom. This is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God.” Every king or queen in England hears those words when they are crowned. Martin Luther said:

People generally think: If I had an opportunity to hear God speak in person, I would run my feet bloody...But now you have the Word of God in church...and this is God’s Word as surely as if God Himself were speaking to you.

That was Luther’s conviction 500 years ago.

Friends, God is a speaking God. His words are living and active (Hebrews 4:12). His words perform what they pronounce. When God said at the beginning of creation, “Let there be light,” light shone into the darkness (Genesis 1:3). When God created human beings, He spoke to us as a man would with his friend. But we rejected His word. We disobeyed His voice, yet mercifully God keep speaking. Genesis 3 to the end of the Bible is God’s ongoing Word to a sinful people, calling us into relationship with Himself. Aren’t you thankful that God doesn’t say to us, like we sometimes say to our friends when we have a disagreement, “I’m not talking to you any longer”? He doesn’t give us the cold shoulder, the silent treatment. God is still on speaking terms with humanity. It’s called the gospel, and it’s throughout Scripture. He’s calling us to trust in Him and to enter a covenant relationship with Himself.

The Bible makes amazing claims about itself

Friends, the Bible claims to be able to get work done in your life that no one else and nothing else can do. The Bible makes amazing claims about itself. I want you to listen to some of the claims the Bible makes about itself, as you hold this treasure in your hands.

- Psalm 12:6, *“The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.”*
- Proverbs 30:5, *“Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”*
- Isaiah 40:8, *“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”*
- Psalm 19:7-11: *“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.”* If you’re languishing or have lost your spiritual fervor, here is where you can get it back.
 - *“The testimony of the Lord is sure.”* No ambiguity. No doubt in it.
 - It’s sure and it is *“making wise the simple.”* If you’re just a simple-minded person and you need wisdom, here’s where to find it: in God’s Word.
 - *“The precepts of the Lord are right.”* They’ll never lead you astray.

- They are “*rejoicing the heart.*” They bring you joy.
- “*The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes,*” leading you on pure paths.
- “*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.*”
- God’s Word is precious, “*more to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold.*”
- It is sweetly satisfying, “*sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.*”
- It is a safeguard. “*Moreover, by them is your servant warned*” about dangers that would damage and destroy us.
- And His words are rich with blessing. “*In keeping them there is great reward.*”

God’s Word is wise and practical. Proverbs 1 says by this you will know wisdom and instruction. You will understand words of insight. You will receive “*instruction in wise dealing in righteousness, justice and equity.*” Here you will find prudence for the simple, knowledge and discretion for the youth. God’s Word is effective. It always accomplishes what it sets out to do. Isaiah 55: says:

*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

This Word is sufficient and complete. God says, “*You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you*” (Deuteronomy 4:2). “*Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it*” (Deuteronomy 12:32). Here is a perfectly reliable Guide. “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*” (Psalm 119:105). It purifies us from sin. It breaks up the hardness of our hearts. In Jeremiah 23:29, God asks, “*Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?*” It breaks up the stony ground of our hearts.

God’s Word is the sword of the Spirit by which we can go boldly into battle, and it’s also a surgeon’s scalpel. Hebrews 4:12-13:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Friends, when you're reading the Bible, the Bible is reading you. It's exposing what's in your heart. It's preparing you to stand before God—which you will one day—and it's showing you what you need to know in order to stand before Him complete. God's Word is good seed. It has the power to give you new life. Peter says, *"You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God"* (1 Peter 1:23). You know, we're born dead spiritually, but God takes the seed of this Word and brings about new life. You must be born again and it happens through the Word as the Spirit of God plants that seed in your heart, waters it and causes new life to be conceived—spiritual life.

God's Word has the power to transform us so that we become like Jesus Himself. That's why He prayed before He died, *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth"* (John 17:17). When we are born again, this Word becomes like mother's milk to a newborn baby. It nourishes us. It makes us strong in faith. Peter says, *"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation"* (1 Peter 2:2). This is how you mature—by drinking the milk of this Word. Your life depends on it. Deuteronomy says, *"Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord"* (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Is there any other book that claims all those things? Those are amazing, breathtaking claims. This is a Book that can do work in you that no other book can do. I love the Gideons who place Bibles in hotel rooms all around the world, as well as in hospitals and schools. If you open up the Gideon Bible to its introduction, you'll read a summary of what the Bible is. Listen to this beautiful statement:

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy; its precepts are binding. Its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened and the gates of Hell disclosed.

Christ is its grand subject, our good its design and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, rewards the greatest labor and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

This, my friends, is the Bible—God’s gift, God’s treasure, for us.

Imagine a famine of hearing the Word of God

I want you to imagine a famine of the Word of God. What if you were told, “For three days you can’t read the Bible, you can’t hear the Bible, and there can be no Bible in your life”? I hope you would miss it more than you miss breakfast, lunch and dinner. I hope you would be crying out for the Word after three days. What if you were told you couldn’t have the Word for a week? For a month? Remember, there are Christians who’ve been in prisons and concentration camps who would have loved to have just a page or two of the Bible to feed on. What would it be like to be told that for a year you could have no Bible? You’d have to go to a church where the Bible is not opened and the Word is not preached; where no one trusts it, treasures it or proclaims it.

Imagine that a famine spread across our land—not of physical hunger or thirst, but a famine of the Word. That would be a crisis, wouldn’t it? God warns us through the prophet Amos that if we do not learn to prize the Word of God, that’s what could happen to us. Listen to Amos 8:11-12:

“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.”

Notice, there’s a progression in those verses: the neglected Word becomes the absent Word. People reject it, then God removes it. People won’t listen to God’s Word. They think they can be happy without it. God says, “Have it your way. I’ll take it from you.” There are some things we only learn to value when they’re withdrawn from us. That’s how it could be with God’s Word. It may not have to come to that for us. Amos warns us, “If you do not appreciate God’s Word when you have it, a time may come when you won’t be able to find it. You’ll wander here

and there throughout the land, searching for a word from the Lord, but you won't find it." There were times like that in Israel's history, and there have been times like that in more recent history.

A medieval famine of the Word

I want to tell you a little bit about the medieval famine of the Word. Back in the year 1519 in Coventry, England, in a place called Little Park, seven Christians were bound with ropes around their waist, their hands and their feet. They were secured to three wooden poles with bundles of hay and straw around their feet, then they were set ablaze—burned at the stake. Their crime was that they were teaching their children the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer in English.

There was a time in history when a widespread famine of the Word had gone out across much of the world. Only the pope in Rome and certain religious officials were allowed to read the Scriptures. The common people needed to show up at Mass every Sunday and keep their mouths shut—and put a little money in the offering. It was thought dangerous to allow the common people to hear the Bible in their own language. There were a few brave people—men like John Wycliffe who, in the 1380s, translated the Latin Bible, the Vulgate, into English. He was called “The morning star of the Reformation.”

His translation of the Bible into English inspired a man in Bohemia, in the Czech Republic, named John Huss. Huss took paper copies of Wycliffe's translation of the Scripture to the people who were starving for the Word of the Lord. So in 1415 they tied John Huss to a stake in the 1415, with the Wycliffe Bibles used as kindling beneath his feet to start a fire. As he was dying, John Huss spoke these last words: “In 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.”

One hundred years later, God raised up Martin Luther, a German Augustinian monk, who hated God because he felt the wrath of God for his sins. He did not know how to find deliverance, until he started reading the Psalms and Romans; then he discovered in the Word of God that the righteousness God requires is a righteousness God gives to those who trust in Jesus Christ His Son. Luther discovered the principles of the gospel—that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone—and he discovered this in the Bible.

Luther then began teaching those Scriptures so powerfully and clearly that people were being transformed. The religious leaders and the political leaders were threatened, because people were believing the Bible and were being set free. So they called a council under the emperor Charles V called the Diet of Worms. (I know if you're German, it's the Diet of “Verms”—but I like to call it the Diet of Worms.) They demanded that Luther recant his preaching and his

writings about Scripture. Luther came to that council one day and said, “I need a little time to think.” He came back the next day and they were getting more and more feisty with him, impatiently wanting an answer. That’s when Luther said these famous words:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by plain reason—for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves—I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant...Here I stand, I can do no other. So help me God.

What was Luther doing there? Sola Scriptura. He was appealing to the Scriptures as his ultimate authority. Not to popes, not to church councils, not to the traditions of men, but to the Word of God. He was captive to the Word of God because he was experiencing its power in his daily life. I love how Luther described his relationship with the Bible in this quote: “The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.”

It’s what I want you to experience here in the Scriptures. I want the Bible to be alive to you—speaking to you—because it is. I want you to experience the Bible running after you. When you’re going off course, I want you to feel the Bible’s footsteps on your tail. And then I want you to feel its hands around you, grabbing hold of you, so that you’re held captive by the Word of God. That’s what this book is—it’s alive, it’s feet, it’s hands.

So in the time that remains, what I want to do is persuade you that Sola Scriptura is three things:

- It’s a doctrine we need to understand. So we’re going to try to get understanding of it.
- It’s a gift we would be wise to appreciate. There are benefits that come from believing and appreciating Sola Scriptura.
- It’s a conviction we must put into practice. I’m always concerned when we preach doctrines like this that we not be content merely to dot the i’s and cross the t’s, checking the boxes and knowing the doctrine. Let’s not become a puffed-up, doctrine-dry church. We know all the things, but we’re not living it. Let’s be a people who put these things into practice and experience its power.

Sola Scriptura is a doctrine we need to understand

What does Sola Scriptura mean? A key answer is found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*” What do we see in these verses?

Number one, everything in the book is breathed out by God. That's where we get the word "inspiration." When you think about the inspiration of the Scriptures, don't think about how inspired you were to hear Joseph playing the piano today. "That was inspiring!" No, think of God's breath, spirant. That's what the word means in Greek: *theopneustos*. It's the breath of God. So what happens if you try to separate my breath from my body? You kill me. I die if you pull apart my body and my breath. In a similar way, you cannot separate the Bible from God. Whatever Scripture says, God says. This Book is as close to God as His very breath.

The other thing we notice is that all Scripture is breathed out by God. Not just the parts you like. Not just the parts that are easy to understand. Not just the parts that seem to agree with our current cultural milieu. Every word—every part of Scripture—is breathed out by God, and He is the God Who cannot lie. Which means because it is God-breathed, it's inerrant. God, Who cannot lie, will never lead us astray by His words. That's what we mean when we say Scripture is infallible. It does not deceive us or lead us astray. And the Scriptures are inerrant. They do not assert any errors of fact. Whatever the Bible asserts, we believe is true, because we believe that all Scripture is God-breathed.

Another thing we notice from these verses is that the Bible is all profitable, rewarding and good for us. We need to teach it and be taught by it. We need to let it rebuke us. We need to let it tell us off when we're going astray. We need it to correct us, to set us back on track. We need to be trained in it daily, like an athlete training for the Olympics. We require the spiritual conditioning that comes through a regimented and regular interaction with the Bible.

The Bible also equips the servant of God. The Bible is the only equipment a servant cannot live without. I could live without Calvin's Institutes. I wouldn't want to. They're helpful. But I could be a faithful pastor of the Word and never read that book. (In fact, I haven't read it—yet.) But I can't live without the Bible. I must have the Scriptures. The Bible equips us for every good work God wants us to do. It's sufficient. Peter says in 2 Peter 1:3-4 that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness through His great and precious promises in His Word.

Just as an aside, Scripture doesn't talk about everything there is to talk about. And when Scripture does talk about things, it does not always speak of them exhaustively. In fact, is there anything the Bible tells us about exhaustively? There's always more that can be known. There are things we need to know about in the world that the Bible doesn't tell us about. But I find this quote by Joe Rigney helpful: "In matters not directly addressed by the Scriptures, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teaching of Scripture."

So does Scripture talk about politics? Yes. Does Scripture talk about the Affordable Care Act? No. But when we think about health insurance, we should think about it using criteria

consistent with the teaching of Scripture. Rigney says it functions as “a final and supreme authority, by establishing the parameters within which we do our thinking about what is true and right.”

So consider these two points that help us understand this doctrine.

Because the Bible is God-breathed, inerrant and sufficient, it is our final authority.

Personal revelations are not. When you want to hear from God, you don’t wake up in the morning and hope that He opens the skies and whispers to you—or shouts to you. You open your Bible and here’s where you hear the voice of God speaking to you. We don’t look for personal revelations. We don’t look to science and philosophy as our final authority. There’s much we can and should learn from science and philosophy. But the Bible is our final authority. Your experience is not your final authority—the Bible is. Church tradition, the pope, your pastor or elders are not the final authority—the Bible is. That’s the first thing we believe this doctrine means.

Secondly, Scripture is not our only authority. Scripture never asserts itself to be our only authority. Can you think of some other authorities that the Scriptures themselves affirm and uphold. There’s the authority of the state. Scripture upholds that. There’s the authority of the church. There’s the authority of your home. There’s even the authority of nature. “The heavens are telling the glory of God. The skies are proclaiming His handiwork.” God is revealing things to us through His creation that are vital for us to believe and understand. They even help us understand the Scriptures, even as the Scriptures help us understand nature and creation in ways we couldn’t without them. There’s also the authority of tradition. The Bible does not always speak negatively about tradition.

Here’s what Sola Scriptura is not. It’s not what someone has called “Solo Scriptura.” It’s Sola, not Solo. In other words, it’s not the Bible and me alone. Let me give you an example of someone who describes an individualistic abuse of Sola Scriptura—and this is common in our individualistic, democratic country. This is a man named Alexander Campbell who said this back in the 1800s. Listen to what he said—and I’m not recommending this.

I have endeavored to read the Scriptures as though no one had read them before me, and I am as much on my guard against reading them today through the medium of my own views yesterday, or a week ago, as I am against being influenced by any foreign name, authority or system whatever.

That's Solo Scriptura. That's a rejection of all tradition. That's a rejection of all other voices of wisdom. It's nonsensical, for one thing. No one can completely erase their own mind every day and just reboot it. And no one can read the Bible without being influenced by the saints who have gone before us. When we try to read the Bible that individualistically, we usually end up becoming a cult member. It's not wise. It's not humble. It's not biblical to think that way about the Scriptures. That's Solo Scriptura.

Sola Scriptura does listen to and hold in high esteem the authority of the church, of creeds and councils like the Nicene Creed. This helps us understand the Trinity. There are creeds that describe the hypostatic union of Christ—things that were worked through in the first few hundred years of the church. We hold these in high esteem. We stand on the shoulders of believers who have gone before us. We need to be wary of ourselves and of anyone who claims to discover a doctrine that's never been seen before. If you meet someone like that and you think they're weird, then know they are probably off-base.

We say that we respect these other authorities—but here's the key. All the other authorities are ministerial. They serve Scripture. Scripture alone is magisterial. Scripture alone is supreme. It reigns over all. I like this quote by Ray Pritchard to help us understand the doctrine of Sola Scriptura:

The Bible is the Supreme Court of the Christian faith. Tradition may be likened to a lower court; statements of faith to a higher court; councils [like Nicaea or the Apostles' Creed] to a court of appeal. But the Bible itself is the Supreme Court from which there is and can be no appeal

That's a good statement, I think, of what we believe when we say Sola Scriptura. But does it make a difference? Is it still relevant?

Sola Scriptura is a gift we would be wise to appreciate

J. A. Medders wrote an article about this and I'm going to summarize some of his points here regarding why we should appreciate this gift.

First, because it frees us from the tyranny of human opinions. There are a million opinions on what you should believe and how you should think and how you should live. Sola Scriptura says ultimately you don't answer to any man. Sola Scriptura echoes what Jesus said: "You shall now the truth from the Bible and the truth shall make you free—free from the tyranny of human opinions." You can say with Luther, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God."

This doesn't mean you don't care what your friends think or that you don't care what your pastor says or you don't care what the church believes. You care about all of this. If you're humble you will read widely and listen carefully. You'll submit cheerfully to the preaching and teaching of God's Word through human instruments. But what it means is no one can pull rank on the Word of God and no one can be a tyrant over your conscience.

Secondly, it keeps us from an unhealthy reliance on human leaders. Pastors and teachers are gifts from the ascended Christ to His church, but God will raise up many pastors and teachers for you. We're all just instruments in His hands. It's the Scriptures that reign supreme over all of us. If a pastor steps outside the Bible, he's lost his authority. The goal of a true pastor is to lead you to submit your life to the authority of Christ through His Scriptures. I want you to trust the Bible. I want you to listen to the voice of Jesus, your chief Shepherd, much more than you listen to my voice.

I don't want to use the Bible to make the points I want to make—I want the Bible to be using me, to be controlling me. I don't want the Bible to be my mouthpiece—I want to be the Bible's mouthpiece. That's what Sola Scriptura does. It says, "Don't put an unhealthy reliance on human leaders. Trust in the Scriptures and in Jesus speaking to you by His Spirit through the Scriptures."

A third benefit is that Sola Scriptura keeps us from going beyond what is written. You may have lots of opinions about the way Christians should act and behave, but the question is what does the Bible say? Does the Bible command this? You may even think there's something very wise that you can express to others about the way they should live, about decisions they should make, about what they should eat or drink or wear or watch or do. But ultimately only the Scriptures can command us. Paul the apostle was very concerned in 1 Corinthians 4:6: "*I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written.*"

Sola Scriptura keeps us from going beyond what is written, making new laws that God has not laid down, calling things sin that the Bible doesn't say is sin. To go beyond what is written in the Bible exalts tradition over truth. Jesus had some strong things to say about that:

- "*In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9).
- "*You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men*" (Mark 7:8).
- "For the sake of your tradition, you have made void the Word of God," Jesus said to the religious teachers of His day (Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-22).

I like this quote by J. A. Medders “The serpent Satan hates Sola Scriptura. Satan loves to add to the Bible. He wants us to think more highly of our thoughts and to think lesser of God’s. But we fight with the sword of the Spirit—the Scriptures of God.”

Sola Scriptura is a conviction we must put into practice

Sola Scriptura is not just trying to get the doctrine right, but it asks what are we going to do about it? I love how Thabiti Anyabwile says you can tell the difference between a sheep and a wolf in sheep’s clothing. You can tell the difference by what they eat. They have a different diet. God’s sheep love to eat the Word. They are consumed by a longing for God’s Word at all times. They’re hungry for the Bible. Like newborn babes, they long for the pure spiritual milk. They say with the psalmist, *“I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments”* (Psalm 119:131). *“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law”* (Psalm 119:18).

Friends, God has wonderful things He wants to show you about His glories, about His wisdom and the comfort He wants to give you through His Word. And especially He wants to show you His glory in the face of His Son Jesus Christ. The way you put this doctrine into practice is you come to this Bible hungry, panting and longing to see Jesus in the Scriptures. They’re all pointing to Him, your Savior. Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 5:39-40, *“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.”* That is wrong. *“It is they that bear witness about me,”* Jesus says. *“And you won’t come to Me. You won’t believe in Me.”*

So the Bible is here to point us to a Savior Who came and lived and died that we might have eternal life. Martin Luther said we need this Bible in order to appropriate what Jesus did for us on that cross. He said even if Christ was given for us and crucified a thousand times, it would all be in vain if the Word of God were absent—if the Word of God did not distribute to me the death of Jesus with this bidding, *“This is for you. Take what is yours.”* This is what the Bible does. It describes Christ to us. Jim Elliot said the Bible is *“Christ in print.”* Christ in print. The Bible presents to you the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament leads up to the gospel and it is then described in all its glory. The Bible tells us, *“This is for you. What Jesus has done is for you. Take what is yours.”*

That’s how we put Sola Scriptura into practice. We come to hear Christ’s voice in His Word. Not just to hear new things. We don’t just come to the Bible to get new information or to get educated. We come to encounter the living Christ in His Word. We come to be reassured by Him, to be reminded by Him, to be persuaded by Him that what He did on the cross was for us. He says, *“Take what is yours.”* Michael Reeves says, *“A wife does not want new information on*

her wedding anniversary. She wants her husband to reassure her of his continuing love. This is what Christ does for His bride each week through the preaching of His Word.”

We can't see these wonderful things without His help. That's why we pray, "Open my eyes." The Reformer Zwingli said we should think of Scripture like a good wine. To a healthy person, it tastes great, and it warms and gladdens the heart. But to someone who is sick, it is distasteful and they wonder how anyone could drink it. The fault is not in the wine, but in the sickness. Likewise, the proclamation of the Word is always good. If we cannot hear or understand it, it's because of the sickness of our souls. So we pray, "God, create an appetite for Your Word in me. Open my eyes to see. Cause my soul to be consumed with longing for Your rules at all times."

Let's put this conviction into practice. This quote is asking us if we really believe in Sola Scriptura. Joel Beeke wrote these words and I'd like you to use them to search your heart to see if you're practicing what we believe.

Do we search, love, live and pray over the Holy Scriptures? Is the Bible the compass that leads us through the storms and over the waves we encounter in this life? Is Scripture the mirror by which we dress ourselves (James 1:22-27), the rule by which we work (Galatians 6:16), the water with which we wash (Psalm 119:9), the fire that warms us (Luke 24:32), the food that nourishes us (Job 23:12), the sword with which we fight (Ephesians 6:17), the counselor who resolves our doubts and fears (Psalm 119:24), and the heritage that enriches us (Psalm 119:111-112)?

This is the gift God has given us in His Holy Word. Let's pray that we would put these things into practice.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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