

**“Sola Scriptura: Back to the Bible”**  
**The Gospel According to Luke 24:27, 44-45**  
October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017

I have with me in the pulpit today, the first two Bibles I ever owned.

\* One is a *Revised Standard Version* in black leather with my name embossed in gold on the cover. I received this one from the church we attended on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1969. I was 7 years old.

\* The other is a *Good News Bible Today’s English Version* given to me by my parents. My mom’s handwriting – “Merry Christmas, Daren. Love from Mom and Dad 1978.”

*If you were asked the differences between a Roman Catholic and Protestant Bible, what would you say?*

That very question was posed to me last weekend as several members and I from the Aledo American Legion post prepared for a graveside funeral of a military veteran. For those veterans holding Legion membership, a Bible is given to their next of kin. And, we present both Catholic and Protestant Bibles.

One of the members turned to me, as Chaplain of the Post, and asked if there was a difference between them. I said the biggest difference is the Catholic Bible includes additional books between the Old and New Testaments – the Apocryphal books. I explained that Protestants don’t believe those books to be inspired by God (nor were they in the Jewish Bible), so Protestant Bibles do not include them.

That different Bibles are used by Roman Catholics and Protestants scratches the surface of differences between Catholics and Protestants. Some of these differences are extremely important – so important, that beginning 500 years ago on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany, a reformation was sparked that impacts the Church even to our day.

Beginning today and for each of the remaining Sundays in the month of October, we’ll study those important differences, conveniently summarized as the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation. They are listed on the slide behind me (and an insert in the worship bulletin). ‘Sola’ is Latin for ‘alone.’ Today, we’ll examine *Sola Scriptura* – Scripture (the Bible) alone.

The 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel According to Luke begins with Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That chapter also reveals some interesting conversation between the resurrected Jesus and a couple of His disciples.

**Luke 24:27 & 44-45:**

Verse 27 – Following His death and resurrection, Jesus is walking with two of His disciples (one named Cleopas) on the road to Emmaus. They are talking about Jesus (the disciples didn’t know they were actually walking with Jesus). Jesus, realizing their understanding of the Scriptures was weak chastises them for their unbelief. “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, (Jesus) expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Verses 44-45 – A little later, Jesus appears to the disciples who were staying in a room in the city. He appeared to them and they trembled. Convincing them He had come back to life from the dead, Jesus said to them, “...These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

We often go forward by going back. And this is what happened in the Reformation. The Reformers weren't forging something new. They weren't setting out to change the world. All they wanted was to go back to the Bible. But going back to the Bible changed the world.

I have three, brief points for today's message.

**MP 1 – The Bible is trustworthy;**

**MP 2 – The Bible is authoritative;**

**MP 3 – The Bible's Main Message – Grace.**

The last couple of weeks during Children's sermon time, I have spoken of the privilege of having the Bible in our language. This was important to those reforming the church in the 1500's because only those who understood Latin could understand the Bible. In that day only the priests and a few scholarly people could read Latin.

God used William Tyndale to bring the Bible to the English speaking world. Tyndale initially asked the Church for permission to translate the Bible from Latin to English. The Church would have nothing of it. In order to begin his work, Tyndale had to leave England for Germany. Finally completed with the translation work, the English Bible had to be smuggled into England.

Eventually, Tyndale was betrayed by a spy who had befriended him. He was jailed, charged with false teaching, and sentenced to death by burning. Tyndale was led through a crowd into the public square. A noose was placed around his neck. His last words were, "God, please open the King of England's eyes." He was then hanged and set afire.

Within a year of Tyndale's death, the King gave approval for an English Bible to be published. Tyndale's Bible was used as a guide for the new translation. This new translation is the father of the *King James Bible* that is still read today.

Because God is faithful, we can deduce that His Word is faithful. **God is trustworthy, so is His Word, the Bible.**

Here is what the Bible says about itself:

The verse of the week. Turn in your worship bulletin, bottom right hand. Let's say it aloud, reference – verse – reference. **2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17** – "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**

Because God is trustworthy, then His Word is also trustworthy. It comes from Him.

**2 Peter 1:19-21** – "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; <sup>20</sup> knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit."

God the Holy Spirit inspired men to record God's Word. They did not write on their own authority, nor did they initiate what they recorded. It is all of our trustworthy God.

**Application:** 500 years ago, Christians were arrested, jailed, and killed by religious authorities for trying to get God's Word into the hands of the English speaking people. It continues today in other parts of the world (North Korea, China, and majority Muslim nations). If such a cost was (and is) paid by those who answered God's call, *shouldn't we make the Bible a priority in our lives?* The leadership of this Church aims to reform her members and ministries constantly according to God's Word. Let's do the same in our homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

**So we can trust the Bible. But, the Bible is also authoritative.** *Sola Scriptura* means that when we have to choose, there is only one choice we can make: Scripture alone is our ultimate authority. In particular, it is the supreme authority, in contrast to the authority of the church and its traditions.

Roman Catholic teaching elevates tradition alongside of Scripture. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it this way in Article 2 of Chapter 2 (*The Transmission of Divine Revelation*), "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture...are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal."

Then, there is today's text from Luke's gospel account. Jesus teaches His disciples that all of the Old Testament reveals Him – the writings of Moses (Genesis-Deuteronomy), the Psalms, and the prophets. All of them look forward to Jesus as the Messiah and the Deliverer of God's people. Jesus does not share the authority of His Word with any other human being.

As we recited earlier in this service of worship (WSC #2), the Bible is the only rule to direct us how we are to understand and serve God (glorify and enjoy Him).

**Application:** Only God's Word is able to bind our conscience. Jesus is the Word of God. At the end of Matthew's gospel account, we see Jesus speaking to his disciples, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (**Matthew 28:18**) He commands us to obey Him and keeps His commandments (**John 14:15**). If you profess faith in Jesus Christ, you must love others who also do so...in all of our relationships - those in the Church, our spouses (if we are married), and our children if God has blessed us with any.

So, **the Bible is trustworthy and it is authoritative.** Finally, we see that the main message of the Bible is this – **God's grace is for sinners.**

One thing we have in common in this room is that we were conceived and born in sin. The Bible tells us "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (**Romans 3:23**).

Unless and until we are given spiritual life by God, we remain in sin without hope. We deserve nothing from God except His disfavor. We are all on a highway to hell – unless God takes us off that way and places us on the road to righteousness; the path of purity. Christian, God has not left you on that highway. He has chosen you for Himself.

The Bible teaches that “God demonstrates His...love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. **(Romans 5:8, 10-11)**

Friend, if you are not yet a believer in Jesus Christ, on the authority of God’s Word, I exhort you to turn away from your sins, and to Jesus. It is Jesus, and only He, who will give your life purpose, and glory in the next life that begins with your death. Trust in Him, and you will have life everlasting.

That is the essence of the Bible’s message – grace. Anything that God does to us and for us is all of grace. We deserved nothing in our own righteousness. But, we only know that from the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are filled with God’s grace – from beginning to end. The Bible’s last verse (**Revelation 22:21**) – “The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.”

**MP 1 – The Bible is trustworthy (T);**

**MP 2 – The Bible is authoritative (A);**

**MP 3 – The Bible’s Main Message – Grace (G).**

TAG – you’re it! You are part of the picture. Now, go share Jesus with others. And, live for Him as we are instructed in the Bible – alone.

Geneva, Switzerland 1535. The city’s governing council broke with Catholicism and aligned the city with the Protestant Reformation. Up to this point the city had been notorious for riots, gambling, indecent dancing, drunkenness, adultery, and other vices. The citizens of Geneva would literally run around the streets naked, singing indecent songs, and blaspheming God! They expected this state of affairs to continue even after they had become Protestants, and the city council didn’t know what to do. Laws didn’t restrain vice. They thought becoming Protestant would solve the problem.

The council had done one thing right, however. They invited John Calvin to become Geneva’s chief pastor and preacher. He arrived in August 1536, a year after the change.

He was ignored at first. He was not even paid the first year! Besides, his first preaching proved so unpopular that he was dismissed in early 1538 and went to Strasbourg, where he was very happy. He had no desire to go back to Geneva. Yet, when the situation in Geneva continued to deteriorate, public opinion turned to him again, and Calvin returned in 1541.

Calvin had no weapon but the Bible. From the first, his emphasis had been on Bible teaching, and he returned to it now, picking up precisely where he had left off 3 ½ years earlier! Under Calvin’s faithful preaching of God’s Word, the people were changed by it. The city became, as John Knox later called it, a New Jerusalem from which the gospel spread to the rest of Europe, England, and the New World.