

Sola Scriptura

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, 2 Timothy chapter 3, 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we're looking at the last part of that chapter, but if we're reading in verse 16, 2 Timothy 3 and verse 16, where Paul writes, 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.

As you know, today is the 2nd of November, which means that unless it's your birthday, it's a pretty ordinary day on the calendar.

Yesterday, however, was the 1st of November, which was All Saints Day. It's in the calendar of the Roman Catholic Church as All Saints Day, because it's the day on which the Roman Catholic Church, they commemorate and celebrate all the saints.

But the interesting thing is that in order to be a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, you first of all have to die. Then you have to wait five years and then be released from purgatory, and then when you finally go to heaven, and then according to public opinion of the living, you can then be made a saint. At present, maybe you've read it in the paper, there are calls for our late Queen Elizabeth to be canonised as a saint, even though the Queen was the head of the Church of England and not part of the Roman Catholic Church.

However, as you know, Queen Elizabeth was already a saint. She was a saint long before she died and long before public opinion wanted to make her a saint, and she was a saint because she was transformed by the grace of God from a sinner to a saint by putting her faith in Jesus Christ.

[2 : 17] So today is the 2nd of November. Yesterday was the 1st of November, All Saints Day, and the day before that, Monday, was the 31st of October, which as you know is inscribed in our calendar as All Hallows Eve or Halloween.

It's a time of year when kids dress up as witches and wizards and ghosts and ghouls and goblins, and they go knocking on doors looking for sweets.

But when you consider the history of Halloween, it's not really what you'd expect, because I've probably mentioned this to you before, Halloween can be traced all the way back to a pagan festival called Samen. Samen was the pagan god of death who was said to allow the spirits of the dead to return and haunt the living on the 31st of October.

But to escape this haunting attack from the dead, the living were to dress up and look like the dead to trick these evil spirits. However, like it did with other pagan festivals, the Roman Catholic Church sought to Christianise Halloween. Remarkably, when the Roman Catholic Church attempted to Christianise Halloween, the Church of Satan objected. The Church of Satan claimed that Halloween is not a Christian holiday, it's the devil's holiday. The Church of Satan went on to say, dressing up for Halloween is tantamount to worshipping the devil. That's what the Church of Satan says. But as I've said to you before, as Christians, I want us to rewrite our calendar. I want us to rewrite our calendar and always see that the 31st of October is not Halloween. It is Reformation Day. It's Reformation Day. 31st of

October is not Halloween. It's Reformation Day. Because it was on the 31st of October 1517 that the German reformer Martin Luther, he nailed that 95-point statement to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

[4 : 39] And Luther's 95 theses, that was the spark which ignited the Protestant Reformation to spread throughout Europe. However, the thing about the Reformation was that schism and separation from the Roman Catholic Church was never on the agenda. The desire of the reformers was always to reform the church. The desire of Martin Luther and John Knox and John Calvin, their desire was to reform the church from within. That's why they were called the reformers. They

wanted to reform the Roman Catholic Church. And they wanted to do it using five principles. Five principles that we've become familiar with. Five principles that we know as the five principles of the Reformation or the five Reformation solas. Because the outcome of the Reformation in the 16th century were these five Latin phrases that summarized the truths that are taught in Scripture. And they summarize the truth of Scripture in opposition to all the erroneous doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. And these five Reformation solas, we've looked at them before, they were sola scriptura, Scripture alone, sola gratia, grace alone, sola fide, faith alone, sola Christos, Christ alone, and soli deo gloria, the glory of God alone.

And it's these five Reformation solas which explain and emphasize to us true biblical Christianity. But as we consider Paul's closing words in 2 Timothy chapter 3, I want to draw your attention to the first and foundational Reformation sola. Sola scriptura, scripture alone.

And I just want to say two things about this Reformation sola. I want to say that sola scriptura is revelation and sola scriptura is regulation. So first of all, sola scriptura is revelation.

It's revelation. Paul writes in verse 16, he says, Now during the Reformation in the 16th century, Martin Luther, he saw Paul's words in 2 Timothy come to life.

He saw scripture come to life. Because even for Paul, back in the first century, while writing on death row in his dark, damp, and dismal dungeon, Paul, as we've seen in this letter, Paul has alerted and affirmed to young Timothy, he said to him throughout this chapter, that in the last days there will be difficult days. There will be dark days. There will be dangerous days for the church. Because there will be many, many people who fail to remain faithful to Jesus, and many people who fail to remain focused upon Jesus. There will be many, says Paul, who will be led astray by dishonesty, and by deception, and by the depravity of false teachers.

[8 : 23] That's what Paul says right at the beginning of the chapter. He says, Timothy, understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.

And as we said before, that word difficulty in verse 1, it sets the tone for the whole chapter. Because it not only expresses that the last days will be difficult days, and dangerous days, and dark days.

But it explains that the last days will be days where there is violence, and their volatile days. There will be fierce and ferocious days. There will be aggressive and antagonistic days for the church. In the last days, says Paul, the devil will be powerful, he will be present, and he will be prevalent, not only within the community, but also within the church of Jesus Christ. And both Paul in the first century and Luther in the 16th century, they had first-hand experience of this. They had first-hand experience of the power of the devil within the church. Because they both knew what it was to encounter and experience clergy in the church, who had, as Paul says in this chapter, an outward appearance of godliness, but denying the grace of God and the power of the gospel. And that was certainly through Luther's day, just prior to the

Reformation. Because for centuries, the Roman Catholic Church, they taught and they told millions of people, they told them that the word of God, it derives its authority from the church and from the Pope.

And that the authority and even the authenticity of Scripture is always subject and subordinate to the tradition of the church and the teaching of the Pope. In other words, what Scripture had to say on any given subject was of lesser importance and lesser interest than the tradition of the church and the teaching of the Pope. But for Martin Luther and all the other reformers, they asserted and affirmed.

And this is what we were looking at last night as office bearers from Professor Janangus. He was emphasizing to us sola scriptura, that Scripture alone is our highest authority. It's our only authority. Scripture alone is our highest authority. Because sola scriptura is revelation. Sola scriptura is revelation. And this was important for the reformers. And it was also important for Timothy. Because revelation is the way in which God has revealed himself to us. Revelation is the way in which God has revealed himself to us. And that's what we're singing about. That's what we've been singing about in Psalm 19 this evening. That God has revealed himself to us through general revelation and special revelation. And as we sang in verses 1 to 6 of Psalm 19, general revelation is where God has revealed himself to us generally. He's revealed himself to all mankind.

[11 : 43] No one is without excuse. Because God has made himself known to everyone, everywhere, through the beauty and the glory of creation. We sang in the opening verse of Psalm 19, the heavens God's glory do declare, the skies his hand works preach. In other words, the creation around us, it reveals and reaffirms to us the existence of God, as our creator. But the thing

is, the creation not only proves the existence of God, the creation proclaims the existence of God. The creation is God's sermon to us. And you know, that's what we should see every morning we wake up. Every night we look into the sky. We should see that it's God's sermon, where he is the preacher. And God is proclaiming his power and his glory to us as his creation. And God's sermon has been preached and proclaimed to us day after day, as David said in Psalm 19. And night after night, he's preaching and proclaiming to the entire human race. And you know what's so wonderful? It's that

God's sermon in creation. It's the longest sermon ever preached. Because this sermon of revelation, it began at the beginning, when God spoke into the darkness and said, let there be light. And God has been preaching his sermon ever since. Because through the brightness of the sun, or even tonight coming to church, the shining of the moon, the flow of the rivers, the power of the sea, the different species of animals and mammals and insects and birds. And even through the helpless cry of our little baby, through it all, God is preaching. And he's proclaiming his power and his glory as our creator.

But as we sang in Psalm 19, the psalmist didn't stop there, because he asserts and he affirms that God has not only revealed himself to us through the general revelation of creation, he's also revealed himself to us through the special revelation of scripture. We sang in verse 7, God's law is perfect and converts the soul and sin that lies. God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise.

So David, he asserts and he affirms that God's law is perfect, because it's God's special revelation. Where God has revealed himself through his infallible, inerrant and inspired word. And you know, we can be sure and certain that God's special revelation is inspired or inerrant and infallible.

We can be sure it's infallible and inerrant simply because, as Paul says there, it is inspired. Paul says that all scripture is inspired by God. It is breathed out by God. It's breathed out by God.

[15:01] You know, I love what Professor Donald MacLeod says in his book, A Faith to Live By. Maybe you've read it before. He has a chapter on the inspiration of scripture. And he says in that chapter, it's not so much that God breathed into the Bible, but that God breathes out of the Bible.

It is God breathed. It is the breath of God. It's not so much that God breathed out into the Bible, but that God breathes out of the Bible. It's God breathed. It is the breath of God.

Do you know, my friend, the Bible by its own description and definition, we're told in Hebrews 4, that it is living and active. And it's living and active, not because God has breathed into the Bible to make it living and active.

No, the Bible is already living and active because it's God's infallible, inerrant and inspired special revelation. Therefore, when the Bible is opened, and this is what makes it amazing, when the Bible is opened and when the Bible is read, God is breathing out of the Bible. When the Bible is open and when your Bible is read, God is breathing out of the Bible. And when God breathes out of the Bible, this is what makes the Bible so unique. When God breathes out of the Bible, he is able to breathe in new life into us.

He's able to breathe new life into dead souls. He's able to resuscitate and regenerate sinners from death to life, from darkness to light, from the dungeon to liberty in Christ.

[16:59] My friend, when God's Word is opened and when God's Word is read, God breathes out of his life-giving Word and he breathes new life into dead souls.

And you know, that's why we often find reading the Bible, we find it refreshing. Sometimes we don't want to read the Bible, sometimes we struggle to read the Bible. But after reading the Bible, even though it was a struggle to start with, after reading the Bible, we always feel refreshed. We always feel revived.

Because God is breathing out of it. And he's breathing into us. He's breathing life into us. God is breathing out of his Word and he's breathing into our soul.

And you know, this is why the most important part of a church service, Angus always reminds me of this, the most important part of a church service is not the preaching of the Word. It's the reading of God's Word.

The most important part of a church service is the reading of God's Word. And as Paul is reminding us here, the most important part is reading God's Word.

[18:11] Because when God's Word is opened and when God's Word is read, God is not only breathing out of his Word, he's breathing into our soul.

He's breathing into our soul. But more than that, he's speaking forth his Word. He's speaking forth his Word. And you know, God doesn't tend to speak to us with an audible voice.

I've never heard the voice of God audibly. Steve Lawson once said, If you want to hear God's voice audibly, then read your Bible out loud.

If you want to hear God's voice audibly, then read your Bible out loud. Because when God's Word is opened and read, God is breathing.

God is speaking. And God's voice can be heard. That's why when the Word of God is read publicly in church, I will usually say, Let us hear the Word of God.

[19 : 13] Let us hear the Word of God. Because when God's Word is opened and read, God is breathing. And God is speaking. And God's voice can be heard.

Do you know what is the greatest privilege to be in church? To hear God breathing. And God's speaking. And God's voice being heard.

My friend, sola scriptura is revelation. Sola scriptura is revelation. But then secondly, sola scriptura is regulation. Sola scriptura is regulation.

Paul says, 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. Now before Paul goes on to exhort and encourage Timothy in chapter 4 to preach the Word of God in season and out of season, we'll look at that, God willing, next week.

[20 : 18] But before he does that, Paul first of all explains the purpose of God's Word. And he speaks to Timothy here very personally. Because he says, if you go back to verse 14, He says in verse 14, But as for you, As for you, Timothy, Continue in what you have learned, And have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul explains to Timothy that the purpose of the Word of God is to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. But more than that, Paul says that the Word of God is profitable. It's practical. And it's progressive. God's Word is profitable, practical, and progressive. He says all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable.

Profitable for what? For teaching. So it's practical, he says. It's for teaching. It's for reproof. For correction. For training in righteousness. And it's progressive.

Why? That the man of God may be complete and equipped for every good work. The Word of God is profitable, practical, and progressive.

[21 : 43] But when Paul says there, All scripture. He means all and only scripture. All and only scripture.

The 66 books of the Bible. All and only scripture. It's sola scriptura. And this is important to know and to note because the story of the Reformation, the story of the Reformation is basically a battle between two Latin words.

That's what the Reformation was all about. It's a battle between two Latin words. Et or sola. And or alone.

Et or sola. And or alone. The Roman Catholic Church taught that it was scriptura et.

Scripture and. Scripture and the tradition of the church. Scripture and the teaching of the Pope. Scripture and. Grace and.

[22 : 49] Faith and. Christ and. Glory of God. And. It was always et. And. But the reformer said, No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

It's sola. Sola scriptura. Scripture alone. Sola gratia. It's grace alone. Sola fide. No, it's faith alone. Sola Christos. Christ alone. Soli deo gloria. It's all about the glory of God. Alone. And as Paul explains here, Sola scriptura is revelation and regulation.

Because sola scriptura, It's infallible. It's inerrant. And it's inspired. Sola scriptura. Scripture alone is authorized. It's appropriate.

And it's applicable. Sola scriptura is real. It's relevant. And it's relatable. Sola scriptura, As Paul says here, Is profitable, Practical, And progressive.

[23 : 50] All scripture. It's breathed out by God, Profitable for teaching, For reproof, For correction, For training in righteousness. That the man or the woman of God May be complete and equipped For every good work.

And you know, This is why the Westminster Assembly In the 17th century That we were studying last night With Professor John Angus MacLeod. He was taking us through The Westminster Confession of Faith.

But this is why the Westminster Assembly In the 17th century, When they were building upon The work and the witness Of the reformers In the 16th century, This is why they clearly And categorically stated In the Westminster Confession And in the Westminster Catechisms, The shorter and the longer, They said that when it comes To the Bible, The Bible is the word of God. And it is the only, The only rule to direct us On how we may glorify God And enjoy Him forever. We cannot go on our feelings. Feelings come, Feelings go. Feelings are deceiving, As Luther said, But my warrant is the word of God, Not else's worth, Believing.

[25 : 07] The word of God is the only rule To direct us On how we may glorify God And enjoy Him forever. Sola Scriptura Is regulation. It's regulation.

Therefore, All our theology, All our doctrine, All our teaching, All our preaching, All our pastoring, All our work, Our witness and our worship, Our Christian character, Conduct and conversation, And all must be governed And guided By sola scriptura.

Because sola scriptura Is regulation. Sola scriptura Is regulation. And you know, That's why we refer to the Bible As the canon of scripture.

Now the word canon Is the Greek word For a read. And a read was A measuring line. It's a measuring line By which things Could be measured.

Therefore, The canon of scripture Is our measuring line. It's what keeps us straight. The Bible is to be our standard By which we measure Everything.

[26 : 17] Sola scriptura Is to be our regulator. It's to be our benchmark. It's to be our measuring line. Which means that we're to measure Every book that we read.

We're to measure Every sermon that we hear. We're to measure Every speaker that we listen to.

We're to measure Every witness that we watch. We're to measure it all Against sola scriptura.

Scripture alone. And you know, I always go back To the people of Berea. I love to meet The people of Berea In heaven. You find them In Acts chapter 17.

Because when Paul went To Berea And he preached there And the people of Berea They heard the great Apostle Paul Preaching the word Of God to them.

But the thing is They didn't believe The word of God Just because the great Apostle Paul Was preaching The word of God To them. They didn't believe The word of God Because of Paul's eloquence Or of Paul's Because of Paul's Education Or because of Paul's experience.

[27 : 19] No, the Bereans Believed the word Of God Because they read it In the word of God For themselves. The Bereans Believed the word Of God Because they read it In the word of God Themselves.

They checked The measuring line As to what Paul Was saying Was true. And you know That was one of the Most beautiful things About the Reformation. The most beautiful thing About the Reformation Was that the Reformers Let the people Read the word of God For themselves.

We don't realise How privileged we are To all be holding A Bible This evening. Because prior to The Reformation The word of God Was only written In Latin.

Can any of you Read Latin? I can't read Latin. No one could understand The word of God. It was only the Roman Catholic clergy Who could understand The word of God.

But it was men Like Martin Luther Who translated The Bible into German. It was men Like William Tyndale Who translated The Bible into English. They risked Life and limb.

[28 : 28] Literally Life and limb. To have it To have the Bible Translated So that we Could read it For ourselves. And by reading It for ourselves We would love Jesus And look to Jesus And listen to Jesus And learn about Jesus.

And lean upon Jesus. By reading the word Of God Ourselves We would have This great Measuring line To live according to To live lives That would bring Glory to God Alone.

It's wonderful We are a privileged People To have the word Of God In our own language And readable That we can read it And understand it That we can open it And know that when we Open it God is breathing God is speaking And God's voice Can be heard And so as Paul Concludes chapter 3 Of this final Farewell letter He reminds us About sola scriptura He says that Sola scriptura Is revelation God has revealed Himself to us Through His word And sola scriptura Is regulation It's there for us To direct us The only rule To direct us So Timothy All scripture It's breathed out By God

It's profitable For teaching For reproof For correction For training In righteousness That the man Or the woman Of God May be complete And equipped
For every Good Work Sola scriptura Scripture Alone May the Lord bless These thoughts To us Let us pray O Lord our gracious God May we give thanks To Thee this evening For breathing out Of Thy word And reminding us Anew that There were a God Who is living A God who is active A God who is still Speaking Speaking through creation Speaking through providence Speaking through Thy word And even speaking Through Thy Son And Lord we pray That we would hear His voice That we would be willing To listen to His voice And live lives That seek to bring Glory to God Alone Oh Lord forgive us We pray For the times Where we don't Follow the measuring Line But that we go Our own way

And we cut out Our own path But Lord bring us Back to Thy truth To walk in the Paths of righteousness We give thanks That we have The word of God In our own language That we're able To understand it That we're able To meditate upon it That we were able To have the word of God And feast upon it Even here this evening And we think of Other places in the world Where they still Don't have the scriptures And we pray For Bible translators As they translate Thy word Into different languages Languages that will Go into Into tribes And into Different places That they would hear That their soul Might live Oh Lord we pray That Thy word That as it says In Thy word That it would not Return to Thee empty But accomplish In the thing Whereto Thou Dost send it That Thou would Send Thy light Forth And Thy truth That they would Be guides to us To lead us Ever to the rock That is higher than us

[32 : 04] Keep us then We pray Go before us And bless us For we ask it In Jesus name And for His sake Amen Well we're going to Bring our time To a conclusion This evening We're going to sing again In Psalm 19 At the closing verses Of that Psalm So picking up At verse 11 Psalm 19 In the Scottish Psalter Page 223 And verse 11 Moreover they Thy servant warn How he his life Should frame A great reward Provided is For them That keep the same Who can his errors Understand O cleanse thou me Within From secret faults Thy servant keep From all Presumptuous sin We'll sing down To the end of the Psalm Of Psalm 19 To God's praise For ■■

His ■ous hip Son of the damned We serve Now he whose life cerca in dear Great reward provided is for them that keep the same.

Can his errors understand?

O cleanse thou me within. From secret faults thy servant keep.

From all presumptuous sin. Do not suffer there to have dominion over me.

[34 : 31] There are just and innocent I from my sin shall be.

Words which from my mouth proceed. The thoughts sent from my heart.

Accept O Lord for thou my strength.

And my redeemed heart. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen.