



**"The Five Solas / From the Start, Salvation has been by Faith Alone  
5 Solas wk. 2 - Sola Fide  
By Pastor Onan Coca 10/08/2023**

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**Genesis 15:6**

**6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He credited it to him as righteousness.**

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Throughout human history, people have struggled with many profound and troubling questions. "Why am I here? What's my purpose? What is the meaning of life? Is there a God?" And so on. One of those old philosophical conundrums was vocalized in the book of Job, chapter 4, verse 17. **"Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?"**

It's a good one. And just like those other deep questions, the Bible has an answer for us.

This month, we're diving into the Five Solas of the Reformed Faith. Last week, Pastor Jody started us off with Sola Scriptura, which is the truth that:

**Sola Scriptura:**

**"The Scriptures alone are our supreme authority. They contain, and are sufficiently clear in teaching, all things necessary for salvation and the life of faith."**-

The Bible, God's Word, is inspired, inerrant, sufficient, and authoritative for everything we need to be right with God.

Today, we'll be spending our time getting a deeper understanding of Sola Fide - or Faith Alone. In the coming weeks, we'll discuss Sola Gratia (Grace Alone), Solus Christus (Christ Alone), and Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone).

But my task is to unpack Sola Fide, of which Martin Luther argued **that "the doctrine of justification by faith alone is the article upon which the church stands or falls."** Just in case you think Luther was being dramatic, John Calvin echoed his sentiments, saying that if we abandon Sola Fide, **"The glory of Christ is extinguished, religion is abolished, the church destroyed, and the hope of salvation utterly overthrown."**

Sola Fide is at the heart of what sets Protestant Christianity apart from every other religion in the world because it marks us as the only faith that finds salvation in faith alone.

In my experience of the Five Solas, Sola Fide is the principle that engenders the most push-back from the non-reformed Christian world. Roman Catholics sometimes argue that Sola Fide is a



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"new" feature in Christianity, invented by the irascible reformer Martin Luther. However, during our time together today, we will discover this principle has been around for much longer than that.

So, let's go back to the beginning with Genesis. Please stand with me for the reading of God's Holy, Inspired, Inerrant, and all-sufficient Word as we see that from the start, Salvation has been by faith alone.

Genesis 15:1-6

***After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir."<sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir."<sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."<sup>6</sup> And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.***

Please pray with me.

Our Sovereign and Holy God, we thank you for your perfect Word. We thank you that you have mercifully revealed yourself to us. We praise you for opening our eyes to your truth, and we pray that you would fill this place and these people with your Spirit so that we may continue to be sanctified in your truth. Change us today. Amen.

In Genesis 15, we find ourselves at an interesting point in human history. In chapter 14, Abram (who would not be called Abraham until Chapter 17) and his friends had just won a great victory over a large pagan army and rescued his nephew Lot and many other prisoners of war. We then watch as Abram is blessed by the great king Melchizedek, a type or shadow of Jesus. This is followed by Abram refusing to take any gift from the king of Sodom because he wanted to make sure that only God could get the glory for his prosperity and the fulfillment of God's promises.

Now, here in Genesis 15 (in light of what just occurred in chapter 14), God is covenanting with faithful Abram to make from him a great people. God makes this promise despite Abram and Sarai's advanced ages; both are nearly 100 years old at this point and well past the age of procreation. But as we see from the passage – **Abram hears the Lord's promise and believes it**, and Scripture tells us that this belief counts Abram as "righteous."



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**Believing**, or faith, is the essence of what we're talking about today, and it is the same process whereby we are saved.

This brings us to our first point: what is Faith?

1. What is Faith?
  - a. Defining it.
  - b. Different types of faith?
  - c. Where does saving faith come from?

As we've already read, the ESV renders Genesis 15:6, "*And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*" But the Legacy Standard Bible and a few other literal translations like the NASB render this verse: "*Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.*"

Did you see the distinction? Let's look at them side-by-side:

*"And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness."* - ESV  
*"Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness."* - LSB

I asked a far more intelligent friend (cough Pastor Mike), which was more accurate, the ESV with its focus on Abram believing the Lord or the LSB with its emphasis on Abram believing "in" the Lord. He said, and I quote... "both are correct." Clear as mud!

But I spent time thinking about it and reading other theologians and have to agree - the sense from this passage is that this belief is multi-faceted, deep, intense, and full of hopeful confidence. Abram doesn't "hope" the Lord is telling the truth. He KNOWS He is telling the truth. The author of Hebrews says it like this in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen."

Assurance. Conviction.

We call this kind of thinking - **faith**. The Baptist Catechism says it like this in question 91:

*91. What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

*Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace (Hebrews 10:39), whereby we receive and **rest upon Him alone for salvation**, as He is offered to us in the gospel (John 1:12; Isaiah 26:3, 4; Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16).*

John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion Book 3, Chapter 2, point 7*, defined it this way - "We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is **a firm and sure knowledge of the**



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**divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.”**

So, saving faith, the kind of faith we see from Abram in Genesis 15, is defined as **the kind that rests upon Jesus alone for salvation.**

At this point, you might recognize a problem. Our definition of faith and the world’s definition are not the same.

Non-believers talk about belief and faith all the time, after all.

As an example, I’ve noticed that many pagans worship a religion they call “science.” They say they place their faith “in the science!” But do they really? Do they really have **faith** in science? They often tell us to “trust the science” on things like climate change and pandemics – but then they also tell us to ignore the science on things like abortion, sexuality, and biology. That doesn’t seem very **faithful** to me.

So, there is more faith and belief than just the one that saves.

b. Different types of faith.

Another example might be that I trust my children, **generally** speaking, but I also know that they are sinners, and so my faith in them can only go so far before it becomes foolishness. And so we see a general belief, a general faith, as well.

There is another kind of faith that the Lord has given to edify the church. While all true believers have saving faith, some have an extra “**gifting of faith**” that leads them to push the boundaries of what the world might call common sense. They do crazy things, like plant churches or fly off to jungle-covered mission fields. This faith is truly remarkable and useful to the body, but it is not the same as the faith that saves.

The faith that saves is a persevering one – it is held tightly by even the most fearful of God’s sheep. It is an ember that burns even in the darkest, most humbling hour of our moments of weakness. We know that Christ is our King; we know that He lived, died, and was resurrected, and we know that He will bring us safely home.

Saving faith may be weak, strong, or anywhere in between, but it always saves.



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This leads us to another question: where does saving faith come from?

c. Where does saving faith come from?

This is a fantastic question that has led to much dispute within the church. Last year, during Reformation month, we studied the Doctrines of Grace (or TULIP). These doctrines were developed at the Synod of Dort, partly to combat Arminianism’s error, which teaches that saving faith can come from us and is an idea that had sprung up in the Reformed Church of the early 1600s. So, this question of where saving faith comes from is one that we must deal with.

Over the last 75+ weeks, my wife and I have walked through the Children’s catechism with our elementary students during the Foundations hour. I love the Children’s catechism as it clearly and simply teaches the foundational truths of Scripture.

Let me show you:

Question 51 restates what we’ve already said,

**51. What is it to believe in Christ?**

To trust in Christ alone for Salvation.

(John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 John 5:11-12)

Question 52, however, goes further:

**52. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power?**

**No. I can do nothing good without God’s Holy Spirit.**

(John 3:5-6, John 6:44, Romans 8:2, 5, 8-11, 1 Corinthians 2:9-14, Galatians 5:17-18, Ephesians 2:4-6)

We must understand that the Bible tells us that contrary to what the Arminians argued, faith **CANNOT** come from us. As the catechism states, we can do NOTHING GOOD without the Spirit.

“Nothing good.” Really?

The pagan mind hates the idea that they can do “nothing good” without the Spirit, but the Bible is very clear on this point – Isaiah 64 verses 5 and 6 (in the NASB), “Behold, You were angry, for we sinned,

*We continued in our sins for a long time;*

*Yet shall we be saved?*

<sup>6</sup>*For all of us have become like one who is unclean,*

*And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;*



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All our good deeds are no better than filthy, but as the New Testament authors explain, it gets worse.

Romans 3:10-12 "None is righteous, no, not one;

<sup>11</sup> no one understands;  
no one seeks for God.

<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
no one does good,  
not even one."

John 6:44 says, "**No one can come** to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." Romans 8:8, "Those who are in the flesh **cannot please God.**" 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural person **does not accept** the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." Hebrews 11:26, "And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

It is impossible to please God without saving faith. No unbeliever has ever pleased God. Ever. There are huge ramifications here, but I want to zero in on the most important one: salvation. If faith is the ultimate **good** choice – but Scripture tells us that we cannot do good without saving faith, then saving faith CANNOT come from us.

If saving faith doesn't come from us, where does it come from?

Oh, this is so good. Church, we serve a Good God who Loves us with a Love like no other. In Ephesians 2, Paul explains –

Ephesians 2:1-10, " And **you were dead** (can a dead man do anything? NO.) in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup> **But God, (BUT GOD) being rich in mercy**, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were **dead** in our trespasses, **made us alive (HE made us alive)** together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and **raised us up with him and seated us with him** in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And **this**



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**is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (What is it? A GIFT.)<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

Family, saving faith is a GIFT FROM GOD. And it's a gift with a purpose – to do the good works that will please our God. Good works born out of faith in Him.

Other passages teach this same beautiful truth - Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the **author** and perfecter of faith. Philippians 1:29 says it's been "**granted**" unto us to believe in Jesus Christ. Acts 3:16 says all faith in Christ **has come from and through** Christ. 1 Peter 1:3 tells us that God has **caused us** to be born again. And 2 Peter 1:1 says faith must be **given**.

Saving faith is from God and has been from the very beginning.

Well, we have defined faith – *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and **rest upon Him alone for salvation***. And we have noticed a difference between saving faith, general faith, and the spiritual gift of faith. And we have discovered where faith comes from, which brings us to our second point. Who is the object of Faith?

2. Who is the object of Faith?
  - a. Yahweh
  - b. Jesus

Let's look back at Genesis 15:6: "*Then he believed in Yahweh; and He counted it to him as righteousness.*" - LSB

I've chosen the LSB rendering here to ensure we notice that the word for the Lord used in the original Hebrew was Yahweh. Yahweh, or Jehovah, means the "self-existing one." He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Creator God who has always been and will always be. Abram's faith was firmly fixed in the person of the Almighty God. Yahweh is the first and obvious object of Abram's direct faith.

By the time we arrive at Genesis 15, God has already promised Abram two other times that he will become a great nation. We've also already seen Abram move out in faith at God's direction several times. But it's here, at the vocalizing of the promise for the third time, where we see these powerful and wonderful words. He believed **in** Yahweh, and He counted it to him as righteousness.



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There is a benefit to reading again what the ESV says here, too. *"And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness."* - ESV Abram believes the Lord. He believes what God has promised. He believes God's WORD.

This impacts us because our definition for saving faith above was *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation.* Obviously, Abram could not have believed in Jesus because He had not yet been born, right? While it's true that Jesus had not yet been incarnated, it's not accurate to say that Abram could not have had faith in the Christ, the one promised in the "proto-evangelion" (first gospel) way back in Genesis 3:15. We often use the word "Christ" as if it's Jesus' last name, but it's not. It's a title. "Christ" comes from the Greek word *christos*, which is a translation of the Hebrew term *mashiach*, that is, "messiah." So, "Christ" literally means "Messiah."

In the New Testament, the authors point to this moment in history to assure believers in the early church that we are saved in just the same way as our forefathers from before the First Advent of Christ.

In Romans 4, Paul argues that BOTH Abraham and David were saved by faith in the COMING MESSIAH and not by the works of the flesh. Romans 4:13 and following begins, *"For the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith..."*

So, we see that righteousness is not through the law (or works) - before we continue in Romans 4, let's move to Galatians 3, verses 11-14, where Paul hits this even harder. *Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*<sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather *"The one who does them shall live by them."*<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, *"Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—*<sup>14</sup> so that **in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham** might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

One other thing to notice here, along with righteousness coming through faith, is that Paul is quoting the Old Testament to prove his thesis, a point we'll circle back to later.

Now let's go back to Romans 4 verses 16-25

For this reason **it is by faith, in order that it may be according to grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the seed,** (it has to be this way so that we Gentiles can be grafted in) not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all—<sup>17</sup> as it is written, *"A father of many nations have I made you"*—in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does*





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not exist. <sup>18</sup> **In hope against hope he believed**, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your seed be." <sup>19</sup> And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; <sup>20</sup> yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> **and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to do.** <sup>22</sup> Therefore it was also counted to him as righteousness. <sup>23</sup> Now not for his sake only was it written that it was counted to him, <sup>24</sup> **but for our sake also**, (God put the Genesis 15 account into Scripture for us! So we would understand that salvation is by faith!) **to whom it will be counted, as those who believe upon Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,** <sup>25</sup> **He who was delivered over on account of our transgressions, and was raised on account of our justification.**

So we see that the promise Abram believed was that he would be the father of a great nation, **and** through him, all the world would be blessed. Jesus is the culmination of this promise! It is in Him that Abraham "sees" the fullness of God's covenant promise, and it is in Jesus "the Christ" that all the nations of the world are blessed through Abraham! It is in this promise of the coming Messiah that Abram places his confidence, knowing that God would do what He has said He would do.

Now, listen to Peter as he speaks to the early church in his opening prayer of praise in 1 Peter 1, which we read last week in our Bible Reading plan, - <sup>8</sup> **Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him** and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup> **obtaining the outcome of your faith**, the salvation of your souls. Who does that sound like? Maybe like Abram in Genesis 15?

In John 8:56, Jesus makes all of this clear when speaking to the unbelieving Jews. He says, "**Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.**" Jesus confirms that Abram was full of joy, confidently believing that the Messiah would one day come through him to save His people.

So we see that the object of saving faith is most assuredly our magnificent Messiah, Jesus.

We've defined faith, and we've studied the object of our faith, but where will this faith lead us?

### 3. Where does Faith take us?

- a. Justification - we are not "made righteous" but we are **DECLARED** righteous (*dikaioné* in the Greek) (He declares us righteous)



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- b. Leads us to sanctification (He will grow us)
- c. Brings us to glorification (He will bring us safely home)

Saving faith is the kind of faith that changes our lives. This faith is simple, but the ripple effects are massive. For us, it is a simple matter of God giving us a heart of flesh so that we may recognize our sinfulness and turn from it to our Savior Jesus. But even in this moment, a complex series of events is taking place.

Theologians call this process the *ordo salutis*, or the order of salvation. I wish I had time to get into this, but I just don't. Suffice it to say there is a logical process that works itself out as a person moves from election before the foundations of this world to final glorification. We see a snapshot of this order in Romans 8:30. *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

Notice, from the Scripture we've read, for faith to exist, regeneration must have already taken place – our heart of stone removed and replaced with a heart of flesh that can rightly see our sin and our Holy God. These things seem to occur nearly simultaneously. One more event also sandwiches itself, almost simultaneously with regeneration and faith, and that is justification.

The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 says this of Justification in Chapter 11, Section 2

**2. Justification Is by Faith Alone**

Faith that receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness **is the only means of justification**. At the same time, faith is never alone, but is always accompanied with every other saving grace. Faith is never dead, but rather, it works through love.

6. Romans 3:28 7. Galatians 5:6, James 2:17, 22, 26

Faith is the only way to justification – which means it's the only way to God.

Romans 3:22-30

**<sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are **justified by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. <sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup> For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. <sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles



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also, <sup>30</sup> **since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.**

In Romans 3, when speaking of justification, Paul uses some variation of the Greek word *dikaioné* more than half a dozen times. This is important because the word means to “declare righteous” as opposed to “make” righteous. It is here that one of the major causes of the Reformation split the Protestant Church from the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholic theologians had long used the Latin translations for justification, which would cause them to argue that God would “make righteous” those with faith – this would lead to doctrines that Protestants did (and still) argue leads to a “works-based” salvation that would exclude people from God’s kingdom. But we point to Galatians 3:11, which says, <sup>11</sup> **Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”**

No, justification is not God “making” us righteous through time and work but “declaring” us righteous by faith alone! As the Baptist Catechism says in question 36:

**36. What is justification?**

Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins (Romans 3:24, 25; and 4:6, 7, 8), and accepteth us as righteous in His sight (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21), only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us (Romans 5:17–19), and **received by faith alone** (Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9).

So, faith is the only way to salvation; further, as Romans 5:1 tells us faith through Christ is the ONLY way for us to find peace with God. **Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Reformation reminded us that – justification – is God’s once-and-for-all legal declaration that we are righteous through faith in His Son, who has done all the work necessary to save us.

Romans 8:32-33

<sup>32</sup> **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** <sup>33</sup> **Who will bring charges against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;**

I can almost hear our opponents rising with a counterargument here, though. They might say something like – “Hold on there, buddy. James tells us the exact opposite!” They’re not totally wrong. In James chapter 2, we see James sound as if he is essentially making the opposite argument of the one I am making this morning – that Abraham was justified by faith alone. James says <sup>21</sup> **Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?** <sup>22</sup> **You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his**



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works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

In fact, we wholeheartedly agree with both Paul, who argues that justification is by faith alone (Romans 4), AND James here who seems to argue that it is by faith and works. In reality, there is no conflict here. Notice, quickly, that Paul’s argument comes from the passage we began with in Genesis 15:6, but James’ does not. No, James’ argument comes from an episode in Abraham’s life many years later in Genesis 22. Abraham’s work in Genesis 22 is the **evidence** of God’s justifying act from Genesis 15. It is the visual proof for the world to see that Abraham has indeed been justified.

So we see, it is God who justifies, not because of our works but indeed apart from them. However, our faith does not stop leading us once we have been justified. While justification may be a “one-and-done” event, faith leads the believer into a lifelong process that we call sanctification, which is precisely the point that James was making in James chapter 2.

Let us look again to the Baptist Catechism to see what Sanctification is:

**38. What is sanctification?**

Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace (2 Thessalonians 2:13), whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God (Ephesians 4:23, 24), and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness (Romans 6:4, 6; 8:1).

Where we would say that salvation is “monergistic,” meaning the work of God alone, we’d assert that sanctification is “synergistic,” God and the believer both working to conform the believer into the image of Christ. The gift of faith allows the believer to begin doing the good works that will conform us to the image of our Savior.

Philippians 2:12-13, <sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

Before we move on here – I want you to notice that when we say “synergistic,” we do not mean that we do work, and God does work, and together, we move forward. No, we mean with Paul – that God does a work in us to change our will so that we will work for His good pleasure. Even our work comes from Him.

From Romans 6

Romans 6:17-18 and 22-23



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**<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness... <sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

It is God who works in us. It is God who changes our will SO THAT we will work for His good pleasure.

This has been God's plan and work since the very beginning. Remember earlier in Galatians 3, when Paul quoted the Old Testament? Well, here it is again – Habakkuk chapter 2:4 underscores the fact that God has always worked this way when juxtaposing the unrighteous with the righteous. *"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith..."*

In Chapter 13, section 1, the LBCF 1689 says it like this: *All who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated with a new heart and spirit created in them through the work of Christ's death and resurrection are also in addition sanctified, both objectively and personally, through the same work of Christ.*

God has set us free from our sin, made us slaves to Himself, and now we will do the good works that will bear good fruit – sanctifying us and making us look more like Jesus. And the faith that brings us to sanctification will continue to lead us as Romans 6:22 says all the way to its end... eternal life.

What waits for us there, brothers and sisters? Oh, it's so good. When our race ends, and we meet our great Savior, oh, what a day it will be! It is there that God will complete this work that He has been doing in us. It is there He will wipe away every tear from our eyes, He will put all of our pain behind us, and we will finally be totally free of the terrible weight of sin that we have carried in this life, and He will glorify us as He has promised! Amen!

Faith brings us to glorification as we see in Romans 8:  
**Romans 8:18-19, 23-24, & 29-30**

**<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God... <sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our**



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bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ...

<sup>29</sup> For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**.

What does that look like? Chapter 31 of the LBCF 1689 says this: **The souls of the righteous, which are then made perfect in holiness, are received into heaven, where they are with Christ and behold the face of God in light and glory.** There, they wait for the full redemption of their bodies... The bodies of the unjust will be raised to dishonor by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just will be raised to honor by his Spirit and **be conformed to Christ’s own glorious body.**

This is what we have to look forward to – being made perfect in holiness, received by our King and our Father, to be made to look like our Savior. There’s more; 1 John 3:2 tells us as much, though we don’t know exactly what that is now. What we do know is that we won’t sin, we won’t be sad, and we will KNOW HIM. This is where faith alone leads the believer.

As the theologian Louis Berkhof said in his *Systematic Theology* – “The man who trusts in God is one who fixes all his hope for the present **and for the future** on Him.”

My final point today asks, Why does God use faith this way?

4. Why does God use faith this way?

a. Soli Deo Gloria – for His Glory. He does it all for His own glory.

Brothers and sisters, He does it for the same reason He does everything. For His Own Glory.

The Westminster Catechism’s first question asks us

**Q. 1.** What is the chief end of man?

**A.** Man’s chief end is **to glorify God**, and to enjoy him forever.

1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36; Ps. 73:25-28.

The reason He created us was so that we ALL would glorify Him.



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Our children's catechism says this wonderfully:

Q. 3. Why did God make you and all things?

A. **For His own Glory.**

Psalm 19:1, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Revelation 4:22 and 5:13

Everything that God has ever done has been for this purpose: to glorify Himself because He is **the Righteous Creator God**, worthy of all glory. I don't want to step on Pastor Jody's toes, as he'll be preaching Soli Deo Gloria for us in a few weeks, but I don't think we can stress this point enough.

God is glorious, and to Him alone, all Glory is due.

We are saved for His glory alone.

Look with me to Romans. Throughout the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul has been steadily building a case for the Sovereignty of God in all things. As we walk into chapter 9, he is about to express God's Sovereignty over salvation through election, but he's also going to give us insight into WHY God works in salvation the way that He does. He speaks of God's choosing of Jacob over Esau – in their mother's womb before either has done anything. He speaks of God hardening Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh cannot obey God, finishing with this line, **"So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills."** Paul, knowing that someone will say, "But that's not fair," then reminds the reader that God is God and they are not. Let's pick up there in Romans 9:19

**<sup>19</sup>You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup>But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup>Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup>What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup>in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup>even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup>As indeed he says in Hosea,**

**"Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,'  
and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"**

**<sup>26</sup>"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,'  
there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"**

**<sup>27</sup>And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved, <sup>28</sup>for the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay."**



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Yes, we were ALL created to glorify Him. Some of us will glorify Him by being vessels of mercy, and others will glorify Him by being vessels of wrath.

The doctrine of election is controversial. Some who claim Christ even go so far as to say that they hate it. What they don't realize is that the doctrine brings glory to our God. God's mercy is glorious on its own. But it becomes even more magnificent when viewed against the backdrop of His wrath toward sin.

He works salvation through FAITH ALONE because it brings Him Glory and leads unworthy sinners like us to marvel at His Goodness and seek to glorify Him all the more. Brothers and sisters, worship Him. Glorify Him. For only He is worthy. Sola Fide and Soli Deo Gloria.

Wayne Grudem says this about saving faith in Chapter 35 of his *Systematic Theology* - **"Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God."**

That short definition is our Gospel, and we are not ashamed to put our faith in it. As Romans 1:16-18 tells us, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"**

As I close, can I ask you a few questions this morning? Has there ever been a time in your life when you recognized that you had fallen short of God's glory? That you had sinned against His Holiness? That you are a sinner in need of someone to save you? Have you ever repented of your sins - have you begged God for forgiveness and turned away from your sin and toward His Son, Jesus? Have you, in conjunction with your repentance, trusted entirely and only in Jesus as your Savior? Believing that He was born into this earth as a man, that He lived a sinless life - keeping all of God's law perfectly, that He was persecuted and unjustly murdered, dying in our place and for our sins, and that He then rose again three days later and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in Glory? Have you repented and believed that He did all of this so that He might save a people for Himself?

If not, today is the day, friends. Today is the day of salvation. Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel, just as Abram did so many years ago. Faith Alone saves.

**[PRAYER]**





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Our Righteous, Holy, and Majestic Father, thank you for the doctrine of Sola Fide. Thank you for teaching us that salvation is found only by faith alone in the work of your Son, Jesus. We praise you for your goodness toward us, that you would glorify yourself through us, and that you would make it possible that worms such as us could dare to bring you greater glory in this life and the next. Please fill us with the faith to know you better, to trust you more, and to preach the Gospel every chance we get. With the Apostle Paul, I pray <sup>17</sup> **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,** <sup>18</sup> **having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we may know what is the hope to which he has called us, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,** <sup>19</sup> **and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might.**

**To God be the Glory.**

Amen.

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

**[RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY.]**

Below is a short list of books and links I commend to you if you wish to study this issue further.

The 1689 London Baptist [Confession of Faith](#)  
[The Shorter Catechism](#): A Baptist Version  
A (Baptist) [Catechism for Boys and Girls](#)

[Faith Alone](#) by Thomas Schreiner  
[The Justification of God](#) by John Piper  
[The Sovereignty of God](#) by A.W. Pink  
[Systematic Theology](#) by Louis Berkhof  
[Systematic Theology](#) by Wayne Grudem  
Matthew Henry's [Commentary on the Whole Bible](#)  
[Justification by Faith Alone](#) Steven Lawson and G3  
[Is faith a gift from God?](#) James White and G3  
[How Important is the Ordo Salutis?](#) Joel Beeke and G3  
[Interview](#) about the Exposition of the 1689 2<sup>nd</sup> LBCF and Founders  
[Why we can't choose God](#) RC Sproul and Ligonier