

The Protestant Reformation

What It is and Why it Matters

A Study

Part 3- The Re-Discovery of the Biblical Gospel

“Sola Fide”

January 18, 2015

Romans 3:19-28

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

To the Glory of God

Now, once again we have gathered together to worship King Jesus, and to take some time away from our “journey” through the

Gospel of Luke and examine a very important part of Church History that came about by God's Providence during the 16th Century called "The Protestant Reformation". And this is the third installment of this mini-series, and so if you haven't heard one or all of the previous sermons on this subject- get with Brother Don and we'll get you a copy.

Now as I told you on the first installment- the Protestant Reformation was *not* simply a *misunderstanding* over issues that don't really matter. It was *not* a *political* argument over who was supposed to be the king. And it was *not* a dispute over personalities. Protestants and Catholics are *not* divided because of some ignorant bias or some prejudice or bigotry. We are divided over two issues:

1. How lost people are forgiven and saved.
2. Who or what has final Authority in the Church.

And those are heady and weighty and eternal issues that *transcend* personalities and politics. So when you hear people say today that it doesn't matter if a person is a Protestant or a Catholic, and that we are all on our way to Heaven together- then know that those statements are silly and trite because they are either minimizing the Biblical issues that brought about the divide or they are ignoring them. But the Reformation itself was not silly, it was not trite- it was huge and massive and should matter to us today.

Now, by God's Grace- as God began to lead me out of a very sincere but unbiblical understanding of Truth some 14 years ago, and as I came to fully embrace Biblical Christianity- I basically *re-discovered* the Grace of God- which had been hidden and obscured from my eyes due to several unbiblical practices and teachings. And that *re-discovery* was- for me- a "mini-reformation".

And that is how you should look at the Protestant Reformation- it was a *re-discovery* of Biblical Truth that had become hidden and obscure through ecclesiastical mis-management and abuse and a whole host of man-made and false teaching. So here is what you should know. The Protestant Reformation was:

- ✓ A Reformation- not a Revolt
- ✓ A "re-discovery" of Biblical Truth- not the creation of a new religion

- ✓ A Return to Scriptural Authority not a Rebellion against Christ's Church
- ✓ A sincere Call to Repentance- not an angry diatribe

But as I personally grew in my re-discovered admiration and love for the majesty of God's Grace shown through Jesus Christ- I became greatly troubled to see just how few people today really understand *what* the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century was really all about and *why* it should matter to those of us who live and breathe today. I mean, after all, we live in a technologically advanced culture of Internet and smart phones, and we are people of science, and so why should we care about what a bunch of men with beards and robes said 500 years ago- we surely have evolved way beyond all that, right?

But let me begin by saying that what was at stake 500 years ago with those men is the very *same thing* that is at stake this morning with us- which is the single greatest and most important question that anybody could ever ask or answer and that is:

How are we- who are patently sinful people
going to pass through God's Judgment on our lives?

... in other words- how are lost sinners made right with God? How does an infinitely Holy and magnificently Righteous God forgive and rescue unworthy sinners? How are human beings forgiven and justified before God? By what process? What are the elements that are and that are *not* included in that marvelous Act of Salvation?

Now as we discovered two weeks ago- based on this Passage that Brother Andy just read to you- the formula for how lost people are justified by a Holy God looks like this:

We are saved:

- ✓ By Grace alone
- ✓ Through Faith alone
- ✓ In the finished Work of Jesus Christ alone
- ✓ Absent human works

... and that is the Biblical Gospel. And I want you to try to understand how radical this was when it was first introduced by Jesus and the

Apostles. And I want you to try to image the great hardship that the Apostles endured to preach and teach this. And I want you to try to appreciate the *exclusivity* of the Biblical Gospel, and how at odds with every other religion and human philosophy it is, and how out of sorts it is with everything that the Jews understand at that time.

The Biblical Gospel is *unique*- nothing else in all the world is like it. It runs counter-intuitive to the natural and normal impulse of fallen humanity to try to do something to earn God's Favor, and it confronts and rejects all efforts by every other religion to make people good enough to deserve Heaven. So the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ stands alone. It is taught *only* in the Christian Church and is believed *only* by Christians.

Now, so far- we have talked about the great *need* for the Reformation- that the visible Church on the earth had become fat, and increased with earthly power and wealth, and had become more interested in the trappings of religiosity than they did with Divine Truth. They became more interested in holding on to political power than they did with being in right standing with God, they paid more attention to the outward demonstrations and the rituals and the ceremonies and the colors and the ecclesiastical trinkets than they did the Word of God, and they cared more for order than they did for Biblical Holiness. And so God raised up men whom He used to bring the Church back to her original state.

Now we saw last week that there were two main "causes" of the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago- two "sparks" that got the whole thing going; two "catalysts" that God used to ignite the fire that purified the Church:

- ✓ The "Formal Cause"
- ✓ The "Material Cause"

Another way of understanding these issues was:

- A. Who has final Authority in the Church? (Formal Cause)
- B. How are sinful people made Righteous before God? (Material Cause)

And the visible Church at that time responded by saying:

- The pope- in his capacity as the “vicar of Christ”- has final Authority in the Church and over the souls of men, over the nations of the world, and over the Scriptures themselves.
- Sinful people are made righteous before a Holy God by a lifetime of faithful participation in the Sacraments and the Mass.

Now last week- we went over the Reformer’s answer to that first “Cause”. The Reformers said that Scripture, and Scripture *alone*, held final Authority over the Church and the souls of men and over the pope himself. And the Latin phrase that signified this “re-discovery” of the Beauty, Authority, and Sufficiency of sacred Scripture was:

“Sola Scriptura”

And from that we learned that all Church Doctrine, all Teaching, and Counseling, and all Edification done in the Church and for the saints must come from the Scriptures, and from the Scriptures alone. And that means that as “Protestants” today- as those who stand today in the line of the Reformers and as those who have not lost our “protest” against Rome in the 21st Century- we must take heed that we do not make the same mistake as the visible Church did back then, and we must remain vigilant in our day that we do not develop or formulate Doctrine or Teaching or Counseling or Edification for the Church and the people of God from:

- ✓ Church History
- ✓ Ecclesiastical Tradition
- ✓ Church Councils
- ✓ Creeds or Confessions
- ✓ Personal Opinions
- ✓ Political Considerations
- ✓ Angelic Visitations
- ✓ Personal Prophecy
- ✓ Dreams or Visions
- ✓ Best Selling “Christian” Books
- ✓ Popular Ideas

And our struggle today is that maintaining “Sola Scriptura” in our

day is harder than it might sound because there are several “barriers” to us understanding God’s Word correctly. There are “challenges” that we face in rightly interpreting the Word of Truth such as:

- ✓ Cultural Challenge
- ✓ Language Challenge

You see, we do not approach God’s Word in a “neutral” way. When we go to Scripture- we bring our own pre-conceived ideas, our ignorance of the culture of the Biblical people, our own biases, and we bring our own prejudices and personal preferences that are inherent in a 21st Century Western, American ideal as we look at the Book.

And so our struggle today must never be to try to make the Scriptures mean what we *want* them to mean- but to discover what God the Holy Spirit moved upon the writer to actually say in that verse or passage. And we must always guard our hearts that we are honestly seeking to be in accord with Scripture and not simply trying to fit in with other men that we respect or with Baptist or Presbyterian or even Reformed ideology.

In addition- the Bible was *not* written originally in English but was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and so there is a language barrier that hinders us- along with the nuances and grammatical considerations that are inherent in those ancient languages.

So the Bible must be studied, and as it is studied- it must then be interpreted using three methods:

1. Literal
2. Historical
3. Grammatical

So, for example- when the Bible says in **Luke 9:14** that Jesus fed five thousand men besides the women and children with two fish and five loaves of bread- we know that Jesus performed a miracle and fed perhaps as many as twenty thousand people or more with two fish and five loaves of bread. Or when Moses wrote that God created Man out of the dust of the earth and He created woman out of the rib of the man- we know that there was a real biological and historical man named

"Adam" and there was a real biological and historical woman named "Eve". That is the literal and the historical part of interpretation.

But interpreting the Bible correctly *also* means using the correct *grammatical* rules with the Biblical languages so that you understand, for example, that when Paul wrote in **1Corinthians 12:31** and said:

But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

.. we understand by using the correct Greek grammar in context with the rest of what Paul wrote in this Chapter- that Paul was *not* giving an "Apostolic Command" to "**earnestly desire or seek after the greater and showier gifts**" as so many people teach today, but was actually issuing an "Apostolic Rebuke" toward the Corinthians people that this is what they were doing- but that he now wanted to show them "**a still more excellent way**" which is why he wrote Chapter 13 in the first place.

But we also learned from Martin Luther last week that *after* we have studied and *after* we have labored over the words of Scripture and *after* we have conjugated the verbs and *after* we have put the Passage into its proper context and *after* we have applied the literal, grammatical, and historical method of interpretation to the verse or passage and *after* we have exhausted ourselves in "Getting the Gospel Right", we are to pray.

We are to seek God's Face- and beg God to help us to arrive at the right meaning. And we are to employ prayer- not as a *substitute* for all our exhaustive efforts in study- because Luther taught us that being empowered by God the Holy Spirit is *not* a short-cut for study, but rather is a *complement* to it.

So that is a glimpse of the magnitude of Sola Scriptura, and today I want to move into the "Material Cause" of the Protestant Reformation which is:

"Sola Fide- By Faith Alone"

Now what is not well taught or understood today is that we human beings have two problems:

1. We are sinners and need Forgiveness

2. We are unrighteous and need Righteousness

We need Forgiveness because we are guilty of sin, but we also need to be made Righteous because we have sinned and have become *unrighteous*.

But we need to understand that Righteousness and Forgiveness are *not* the same thing. Forgiveness graciously *pardons* us from our sins, but Righteousness allows us to stand in the Presence of God in Heaven. So for sinful people to go to Heaven- we need to be forgiven, but we also need to be made Righteous.

Now please understand that I am not taking *anything* away from Forgiveness by talking about Righteousness. I, too, am a great sinner in need of great forgiveness by a great God, and so without God forgiving me- nothing else matters- I would be doomed.

But because God is absolutely perfectly Righteous- anyone who stands in God's Presence in Heaven must be just as Righteous as God Himself is. You see, the Bible says that God cannot stand sin. He cannot tolerate Sin for a single second. God is so Holy and so Pure and so Glorious and so Perfect that in order to stand before Him requires that we are just as sinlessly perfect as He Himself is.

So we have to know that being "cleansed" from sin or "pardoned" from our iniquity or being forgiven does *not* make us Righteous. So the issue is: How? How do sinful human beings become sinlessly perfect in thought, word, and deed so that we may stand in God's Presence in Heaven?

The visible Church on the earth 500 years ago taught that human beings must become righteous by participating in the Church Sacraments and by faithfully attending the Mass over the entire time they are alive. So what the Roman religious system taught both then and now is that we have to develop "our own personal intrinsic righteousness" through these efforts. And then at the time of our death- we will still far short of sinless perfection- and so they invented an unbiblical place called "Purgatory" where the souls of the "forgiven" and yet "unrighteous" go until they can be "purged" from their unrighteousness, and then after that- they may enter into Heaven to be with God.¹

¹ The Catechism of the Catholic Church

Now according to what they teach- the time spent in Purgatory varies by individuals. Some have to spend hundreds of thousands of years being made righteous while others may get out sooner depending on various issues like:

- ✓ The granting of an indulgence
- ✓ The pope interceding by making a "withdrawal" from the "Treasury of Heaven"²

Now the "Treasury of Heaven" is a place in Heaven that the Roman system teaches where the "excess merit" of Jesus Christ, and the Biblical saints, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and other renown people are "stored". The Catholic Church, through the office of the pope, may "withdraw" some of that "merit" and attach it to certain people to allow them to get out of Purgatory sooner than normal.³

And two of the reasons why such a "withdrawal" could be made would be:

- ✓ It was discovered that the individual in question had committed several acts of great and widespread kindness, generosity, or "meritorious works" during his lifetime that would commend him to receive such a withdrawal. (in other words- he had "earned" it)
- ✓ A sizable contribution would be given in that individual's name to the Church (the withdrawal was paid for)⁴

... so the Church taught that we have to develop our own, personal, intrinsic, righteousness by and through these "means" in order to go to Heaven. To wit Martin Luther wrote,

"...Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?"⁵

So the Reformers began to teach that the accepted understanding of how sinful people are saved and made righteous was at odds with

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Luther, Martin, *"The 95 Thesis"*

Scripture (now you see why Sola Scriptura had to be established first). The "Protestors" began to teach that we are made righteous "by faith" and not by works- not even good, noble, or *religious* works. And they quoted the very Passage that Brother Andy just read to us. Look again at verses 20&21:

20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

21 But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

Notice that in verse 20- the issue is "justification" which has to do with forgiveness. But now notice that verse 21 deals with the issue of "Righteousness". So here Paul is teaching that the Righteousness of God that both the Law and the OT Prophets *foretold* has now been manifested. But look just *how* he said this Righteousness was manifested by reading the first part of verse 21 again:

... apart from the Law ...

So Paul is teaching here that the Righteousness of God- that allows sinful human beings to enter in God's Presence in Heaven- that the OT talked about- has now been manifested as being acquired "apart from the Law". In other words- Paul is teaching here that this Righteousness was not earned by what we did (in this case keeping the Law), but was manifested or acquired by sinful human beings "apart from the law", or apart from religious works. Now look again at verse 22:

even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

So *how* did the Apostle Paul teach in inspired and infallible Scripture that we obtain this Righteousness?

... through faith in Jesus Christ ...

And who is this Righteousness for?

... all those who believe ...

And why is this true?

... for there is no distinction

... in other words- because we are all sinners. So the Bible does *not* teach that we are made righteous by what we do for ourselves- either by partaking of the Sacraments and the Mass, or through indulgences and withdrawals made by the Church on our behalf- but that we are made Righteous "by faith" and "by faith alone".

Now it is also true that we are justified by faith alone as well- but the Reformers saw the need of adding two more statements to that issue which would then become absolutely Biblical because in truth- we are justified:

By Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone

... so they added two more Latin phrases to emphasize this Truth and we will get to them in succeeding weeks:

"Sola Gratia- by Grace alone"

"Solus Christus- by Christ alone"

So the teaching of the existing Church 500 years ago was wrong and at odds with Scripture. And the Reformers made that distinction and moved to call the existing visible Church to repentance for operating in an unauthorized manner- which that religious system did not enjoy then and does not enjoy today.

So the Reformers taught there were three different kinds of righteousness at work:

- A. The Righteousness of Jesus Christ (The Righteousness of God)
- B. The personal intrinsic righteousness of the believer that *is* actually developed during the Sanctification process
- C. The false man-made righteousness developed through works

The first "Righteousness" (A) is the Righteousness of Jesus Christ which Paul calls "**The Righteousness of God**" in **Romans 3**. This is that Righteousness that Jesus *earned* and *developed* by living on this earth for 33-1/2 years and never sinning. The Bible very clearly and repeatedly teaches that Jesus was absolutely sinless the entire time He lived on earth as a Man. Jesus was *always perfectly* obedient to God the Father, He was *perfectly* led by God the Holy Spirit, and He was in *perfect accord* with the entire Law of God in thought, word, and deed 24 hours every day and 7 days every week.

And the Law taught that the reward for keeping it perfectly was Righteousness. So in *that* sense- Jesus literally *earned* His Own Righteousness by living a sinless Life- (which explains *why* Jesus was born as a baby and lived down here for 33-1/2 years rather than just coming down as a full grown man on Friday morning, being crucified on Friday afternoon, rising from the dead on Sunday morning, and ascending up to God on Sunday evening.)

Now the last "righteousness" (C) is the righteousness that the Roman Church and the Pharisees wrongly taught that we develop that allows us to go to Heaven. And God's Word says this about that kind of righteousness in **Isaiah 64:6**:

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Now keep in mind that this verse is not talking about our sin- but our righteousness. So what this verse means is that when we do something good in our own strength and in our own power, and when we accomplish some noble goal or do some admirable feat for the goal of trying to earn Heaven- in other words- when we are operating on all cylinders, when we are doing our best- it is then that our own personal righteousness rises to the level of being a "filthy garment". So this filthy garment is not the *worst* thing about us- the Bible says this is the *best* thing about us.

Now the English phrase "filthy garment" that the Prophet Isaiah used here comes from the Hebrew word that means: *a rotten menstruous cloth*. And that is what the righteousness that we are trying to earn or our own "self-righteousness" looks like to God. So this

is certainly *not* the kind of righteousness that would allow any of us to enter into God's Presence.

This *third* "righteousness" is the "righteousness" that we *think* we are developing by doing religious works. But we really don't have it- because we simply cannot make ourselves to be righteous by anything that we do for ourselves. So this third righteousness is really only in the mind of deceived people. This is the kind of "righteousness" that we *imagine* that we have as we are working so hard to earn it. And Paul talked about it in **Romans 10:1-4**

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation.

2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

So we should never get the notion that we can make ourselves righteous enough to go to Heaven by what we do for ourselves because no matter how hard we try- we can never attain to the perfect Righteousness that standing in God's Presence requires. So our ability to enter into Heaven does not rest with our own righteousness, and so we need the spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ or we have no hope. And the Bible says that we obtain *that* perfect Righteousness "by faith".

Now the second "righteousness" that the Apostle Paul taught is interesting because this is almost the same thing as the third one. This second kind of "righteousness" is what is made better through the life-long process of Sanctification. It is true that we ourselves do, in fact, become more holy, and less tolerant of sin, and more biblical in our thinking, and more scripturally oriented, and more like Jesus. And so it becomes easier for us to repent, easier for us to hunger and thirst after God, we mirror Christ's Image better and more precise and for longer periods of time due to the fact that we are being sanctified.

The difference between the second and third kind of righteousness is that we always need to understand that this personal intrinsic righteousness will never rise to the level of being perfectly spotless, and

so even though we are pleasing God more- we are not sinless, and, therefore- we could never go to heaven if this was our only vehicle.

So Christ's spotless Righteousness is our only hope. And so we must reject the other two kinds of "righteousness" out of hand as being able to allow us to go to Heaven. So the remaining issue is "How"? How do we obtain the Righteousness of Jesus Christ? Do we ask for it? Do we seek for it? Do we serve for it? Do we do something to earn it?

No. Martin Luther taught three things about us obtaining Christ's Righteousness:

1. It is an Alien Righteous
2. It is an Immaterial Righteousness
3. It is an Imputed Righteousness

First of all- we must understand that the Righteousness of Jesus Christ is an "Alien Righteousness". Now that doesn't mean it is from outer space- it simply means that it is a righteousness that does not come from inside of ourselves. The Righteousness that allows us to go to Heaven is not inherent in us. It is a Righteousness that comes from "outside of ourselves". This Righteousness comes from the Lord Jesus Christ.

So how do we get it? Luther also taught that this Righteousness is "Immaterial". Now in our day- the word "Immaterial" means that it is of little or no value. But 500 years ago- this word meant "without a mediator". Listen to what Paul taught about this from **1Timothy 2:5**:

For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,

So the Reformers taught that Scripture declares that the Righteousness of Jesus Christ comes to us *directly* from Jesus- without having to go through a middle man- in this case- the Church. So the Scriptures teach that this "Alien Righteousness" comes to us directly from the Lord Himself and does not have to pass through the Church by way of the Sacraments or by other religious duties.

Okay- but what is the *catalyst* that allows me to have Christ's Righteousness? The Bible says, "Faith alone". So I obtain the very same Righteousness of Jesus Christ which allows me to go to Heaven-

not by partaking of the Sacraments, not by attending the Mass- but I receive this spotless Righteousness by believing, by trusting, by faith alone. Here is what Paul taught from **Romans 4:1-9**:

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "*ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*"

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "*BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.*"

8 "*BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.*"

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "*FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*"

Finally- the Reformers taught that the Righteousness that allows us to go to Heaven is an "Imputed Righteousness". So the Bible declares that God the Father takes the spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ that He earned while living a sinless life here on the earth as a real man, and God "imputes" or "credits" that Righteousness to us- and He does that by the agency of "faith alone" or "Sola Fide".

Luther went on to teach that a saved human being occupies a "dual status" while here on the earth. We are "made" or "declared" Righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, and yet we *personally* remains sinful. And the Latin phrase he used to teach this was:

Simil ustus et peccator- simultaneously Just (Righteous) and sinful

Now this teaching about "Sola Fide" created no small stir because by using just these two concepts- "Sola Scriptura" and "Sola Fide"- the Roman teaching about Salvation and Authority was exposed as the fraud that it was, and it was then rejected by literally tens of millions of people- which ignited the Protestant Reformation.

And by using the concept of "Sola Scriptura"- the Reformers were able by God's Grace to "re-discover" the Biblical Gospel and unveil the Truth about how sinners are made Righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. And in doing so- they forced the existing visible Church to either repent or confirm their unbiblical teaching. Sadly they confirmed it and to this day- the Roman religious system calls the concept of "Sola Fide" a "legal fiction" as they continue to enslave people with their false teaching about righteousness.

Now to illustrate how serious an issue "Sola Fide" was, and just how life changing it is for those who embrace it- I want to introduce you to a 17 year old girl named "Lady Jane Grey". Jane rule England for only nine days in between the reign of King Edward VI and Queen Mary. King Henry VIII ruled England from 1509 until 1547, and Edward VI ruled from 1547 to 1553, and Mary ruled from 1553 to 1558. But, in between Edward and Mary- Lady Jane Grey ruled for nine short days.

Now you may remember that I told you about a man named William Tyndale in my first sermon. And when the Church had Tyndale killed- he prayed, "Lord open the King of England's eyes". And God answered Tyndale's prayer by using the evil, adulterous King Henry in 1534- to issue "The Act of Supremacy" which removed the pope from being the ecclesiastical leader in England and replaced him with the Arch-bishop of Canterbury- who is the temporal head of the Anglican Church, or the Church of England. This "Act" has the effect of ending the domination in England by the Roman Church.

So when Henry died- his only son, Edward VI, ascended the throne at the age of nine in 1547. But Edward was very sickly and died after reigning only 6 years. So from 1534, until Edward's death in 1553- the Bible was preached and taught and read and understood throughout all England. And this was a time of great celebration that saw people literally dancing in the streets as they came to realize from reading God's precious Word at they could be forgiven and made righteous by faith alone and not through the Sacraments of the Church.

And it was during this time that many of the Puritans lived and conducted their ministries and wrote their books that we enjoy today.

But at Edward's death- England turned to Henry's first born daughter- Mary- and a hush fell over the whole nation- for you see, Mary was Catholic to the core and had promised to restore Catholic rule in England during her reign.

So there was a mad scramble to try to find somebody- *anybody*- who could ascend into the throne that was both a relative of King Henry and a Protestant. And they found one- a distant cousin named Lady Jane Grey. Now by all accounts- Lady Jane was a child prodigy. She had taught herself to read Greek at 13 so she could in her own words, "Study and learn God's precious Word". At 14 she wrote a letter to the Great Church in Zurich- to the man who had replaced the great Reformer Zwingli, and asked him if he could give her any help because she was trying to also teach herself Hebrew.

So this 16 year old child ascended the throne of England- but after only 9 days- Mary had Lady Jane Grey deposed and put into the Tower of London along with about 300 of the Puritans. Mary then went about to persecute the Protestants and earned her nickname "Bloody Mary".

Now while Lady Jane Grey was in the Tower of London- Mary sent one of the most powerful and eloquent Catholic Arch-bishops to try to get her to renounce her Protestant beliefs and be "re-converted" back to Catholicism. Now keep in mind that Lady Jane had just turned 17 while in prison and she is on trial for her very life.

And here is the account as recorded by a scribe that was present. And as you hear this- notice that this young child uses both concepts of "Sola Scriptura" and "Sola Fide"- to stand against this mighty arch-bishop- even as her very life was at stake:

Arch Bishop Feckinham: "How many Sacraments are there?"

Lady Jane Grey: "There are two- Baptism and the Lord's Supper."

AF: "No, there are seven."

LJG: "By what Scripture?" (Sola Scriptura)

AF: “You base your faith on authors who say and unsay in the same breath and not upon the Church- unto whom you ought to give credit”.

LJG: “No, I ground my faith upon God’s Word and not upon the Church for if the Church be a good Church- the faith of the Church must be tried by God’s Word and not God’s Word by the Church. And I say it is an evil Church and not the spouse of Christ but the spouse of the devil that alters the Lord’s Supper, and both takes from it and adds to it- to that church I say- God will add plagues. Shall I believe this church? God forbid!”

AF: “What then is required of a Christian?”

LJG: “That he should believe on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost- the three Persons of the one God”

AF: “Is there no other requirement of a Christian but to believe in God?”

LJG: “Yes, we must also love God- with all our heart and with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and we are to love our neighbor as ourself.”

AF: “So then faith only justifies and saves?”

LJG: “Yes. It is exactly as you say. Paul says that faith justifies.” (Sola Scriptura/Sola Fide)

AF: “But St. Paul says that if all I have is faith without love- it is nothing.”

LJG: “True it is. For how can I love Him whom I trust not? Or how can I trust Him whom I do not love? Faith and love go both together. And that love is comprehended in faith.”

AF: “So how should we love our neighbor? To love our neighbor is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to give drink to the thirsty and to do to him as we would be done to. Why then, it is necessary unto Salvation to do good works also isn’t it? It is not sufficient only to believe. You must do good works.”

LJG: “I deny that. And I affirm that faith only saves. But it is necessary for a Christian to do good works so he may follow in the steps of his Master, Christ. Yet may we never say that these works profit to our Salvation. For when we have

done all- we are unprofitable servants and faith only in Christ's Blood saves us.”
(Sola Fide)

Now I really don't think that any of the Reformers themselves could have answered this arch bishop any better than this 17 year old child did on that day. But because she had been studying the Bible- a 17 year old girl was able to defend the true Gospel and put to naught the trickery and heresy of an arch-bishop. That is the Power of the Word of God.

Lady Jane Grey was taken out and hanged not long after that. But, before she died- she inscribed in her Bible- a letter to her sister Catherine- which is now on display at the British Library which shows that God will do what He has promised, and He will indeed sustain us in the hour when we stand before magistrates for a defense of the Gospel. In that letter she said,

“Here dear sister is a Book- that although it is not outwardly trimmed in gold- yet inwardly it is more than precious stones. It is the dear Book, my sister, of the Law of the Lord. Rejoice in Christ as I do. Follow the steps of your Master, Christ, and take up your cross. Lay your sins on His Back and always embrace Him. And as touching my death- rejoice as I do, good sister, that I shall be delivered from this corruption and put on incorruption. For I am assured that I shall, having lost my mortal life, I shall win an immortal one.”⁶

So as she faced the gallows to be hanged at 17 years of age as martyr for the Faith- Lady Jane Grey told her sister, “Rejoice in Christ as I do”. Amen. So let us hope and trust and put all our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as well- so that we, too, may obtain an immortal life.

Let's pray.

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⁶ *Letter from Lady Jane Grey to her sister Catherine*; on loan to the British Library; dated 1553

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.