

THE REFORMATION
Sola Gratia...Only Grace
Ephesians 2:4-10

In an age of *corruption* and *false teaching*, the **Protestant Reformers returned** to the Scriptures. There they found the way of *salvation*. Instead of *indulgences* (*pardons, clemencies, and positions and promotions* within the church), the *Mass, relics, idols*, and other *superstitions*...they rediscovered the ancient way of *salvation: The Gospel*.

The **five solas** were their attempt to summarize *biblical teaching on salvation*.

- **Sola Scriptura** (*only Scripture*)

That *Scripture, as contained in the Bible, is the only authority for the Christian in matters of faith, life, and conduct*. The teachings and traditions of the church are to be *completely subordinate* to the Scriptures. **Roman Catholicism**, on the other hand, holds **Scripture and Tradition** to be of the same.

- **Sola Gratia** (*only Grace*)

That we are saved *by grace alone*. The **Reformers** were calling the church back to the *basic teaching of Scripture* where the apostle **Paul** states that we are “...*saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God...*” (**Ephesians 2:8**).

- **Sola Fide** (*only Faith*)

That *we are justified before God (and thus saved) by faith alone, not by anything we do, not by anything the church does for us...and not by faith plus anything else*. It was also recognized by the early **Reformers** that **Sola Fide** is not rightly understood until it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of **Sola Gratia**.

- **Sola Christus** (*only Christ*) (Acts 4:12)

Not through **Mary** or any *saint* within the church.

- **Sola Deo Gloria** (*To God's Glory Alone*)

The truth that God makes us alive...and is completely for us... can be *summarized in the combined declaration*: By **God's grace alone**, on the basis of **Christ alone**, received through **faith alone**, to the **glory of God alone**, with **Scripture alone** as the *only, final, decisive, authority on truth*.

In general, evangelical **Protestants** see the **Reformation** as simply *a call back* to the **Bible...biblical Christianity**.

Martin Luther

For years, **Martin Luther**, an **Augustinian** monk, had been critical of the **Catholic Church**, particularly of the idea of *selling of indulgences*, or the *reprieves that came from penance*. **Luther** had become disillusioned by what he saw as the Church's *corruption*, especially as manifested in the **Pope's** matter-of-fact *selling of those indulgences*. Deeply convicted, he had *studied* the problem and *prayed* for years to determine what he might do.

It came to a head in **1517**, when **Luther** became infuriated when **Pope Leo X** announced a *fresh sale of indulgences to help pay for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica*. In his passion and zeal, he wrote the “**95 Theses**.” The **95 Theses** were a *devastating critique* of what these *indulgences* were doing to the Christian faith. He then went and *nailed a copy* to the **University of Wittenberg's** chapel door. Within *two weeks*, printed copies spread throughout **Germany**...and within *two months*, throughout the rest of **Europe**. Strengthened in the belief that he was right, **Luther** continued writing and publishing tracts increasingly critical of the Catholic Church.

In **1521**, he was brought before the **Diet** of the church officials at the **city of Worms**...and called upon to renounce his beliefs. **Martin Luther** replied, *“My conscience is held captive by the Word of God. Therefore, I cannot, and I will not recant. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me.”* As a result, Luther was *excommunicated* for his beliefs and was in constant danger of being *burned at the stake*.

The Reformers rejected...

- The sovereign and infallible authority of the Pope.
- The merit of good works for *penance* and *salvation*.
- Indulgences (*pardons*, *clemencies*, and *positions* and *promotions* within the church).
- The mediation of...and prayers to...Mary and the Saints.
- All but the two sacraments instituted by Christ (Baptism and the Lord's Supper).
- The doctrine of transubstantiation.
- The attendance at mass as a sacrifice.
- Purgatory.
- Prayers for the dead.
- Confessions to a priest.
- The use of Latin in the services.
- And all the paraphernalia (*icons and idols*) that expressed and/or supported these ideas.

The reception of the *truths* formed as a result of the **Reformation**...as found in the Bible...is not about what some people thought 500 years ago. It's about how we will experience either *everlasting judgment* or *joy* forever.

Key Texts

*“For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you **turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God**, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who **rescues us from the wrath to come.**”*

~I Thessalonians 1:9–10

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as **a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;”*

~Romans 3:23-24

*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being **rich in mercy**, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**)...”*

~Ephesians 2:1–5

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GRACE AND MERCY

GRACE...*God giving us what we can't earn and don't deserve.* Grace opens the door to *heaven...salvation*.

MERCY...*God not giving us what we have earned and do deserve.* Mercy closes the door to *hell...judgment*.

GRACE...*it isn't given for us to do what we want to do...it is given for us to do what we ought to do...to obey.*

God's Desire <i>(His invitation)</i>	+	God's Strength <i>(Power)</i>	=	God's Will <i>(Glory)</i>
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There are many dimensions of grace. That is why it is described as the *manifold grace of God*.

SALVATION...

God desires all to *repent* and be *saved*.

**All be saved + Victory over = Eternal Life...Heaven
Sin and Death**

II Peter 3:9 Romans 1:16 I Thessalonians 5:9
I Timothy 2:4 I Corinthians 1:18
Ezekiel 18:23, 32 I Corinthians 15:54b-57
Ezekiel 33:11

God's Desire: All to be saved

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

~II Peter 3:9

"...God our Savior...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

~I Timothy 2:3-4

"Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked...For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies...Therefore, repent and live."

~Ezekiel 18:23, 32

"...I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn back from his way and live..."

~Ezekiel 33:11

God's Strength (Power): Victory over sin and death

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

~Romans 1:16

"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

~I Corinthians 1:18

"... 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

~I Corinthians 15:54b-57

God's Will (Glory): Heaven...His free gift of eternal life

"For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

~I Thessalonians 5:9

"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

~I John 5:11-13

WORKS...

God created us to work (**Genesis 2:15**)...not *for* our salvation, but *out of* our salvation...for His *glory* and His *good pleasure*.

**Created to work + Gifts and Talents = We work with
God ...not for
God**

Ephesians 2:10 + Philippians 4:13 = Philippians 2:13
II Corinthians 12:9

God's Desire: Created to work

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

~Ephesians 2:10

God's Strength (Power): *Gifts us and gives us talents for good works*

*"I can do all things through Him who **strengthens** me."*
~Philippians 4:13

*"...My **grace** is sufficient for you, for **power** is perfected in weakness...so that the **power** of God may dwell in me."*
~II Corinthians 12:9

God's Will (Glory): *God works in us and through us. We work with God...not for God.*

*"For it is God who is at work **in** you, both to will and to work **for His good pleasure**."*
~Philippians 2:13

Note: Spiritual Gifts are described as "grace gifts" in Scripture.

*"As each one has received a special **gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the **manifold grace** of God."*

~I Peter 4:10

*"Since we have **gifts** that differ according to the **grace** given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly..."*
~Romans 12:6

How we deal with sin...

Repent + **Authority to forgive sin** = **Cleansed of all unrighteousness**

How we live...our lifestyle...

Purity + **Victory over temptation** = **Holiness**

SIX FACTORS OF GRACE

- **FREELY** given: It's a *gift*...it's *not earned* or *deserved*.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ; Ephesians 3:7; Psalm 84:11; Romans 12:6

As we receive **grace**, we are to give **grace** also. Even our words need to be *tempered with grace* so that *it will give grace to those who hear*.

*"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it **will give grace** to those who hear."*

~ Ephesians 4:29

- **Given to ALL:** Given to both the *saved* and the *unsaved*.
*"For of His faithfulness we have all received...**grace** upon **grace**."*

~John 1:16

*"The **grace** of the Lord Jesus be with **all**. Amen."*

~Revelation 22:21

(Last verse in the Bible)

- **Given in MEASURE:** As we respond to **grace**, God gives more **grace**. **Grace** is *given in degrees*...we don't get it all at once. We are to *grow in grace*.

Romans 5:17 (*abundance*); Romans 5:20 (*abounds*);

II Peter 3:18 (*grow in grace*); I Peter 1:2 (*full measure*);

Ephesians 4:7 (*according to the measure of Christ's gift*)

- **SUFFICIENT** for every situation: *Given according to the need of the moment. (Dying grace on dying days)*

II Corinthians 12:9 (*sufficient*); Proverbs 3:34 (*to the afflicted*)

- Grace can be **RESISTED** and **REJECTED:**

*"See to it that no one comes short of the **grace** of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."*

~Hebrews 12:15

Unbelief...the result of *rejecting grace*.

Stubbornness...(Romans 2:5)

Pride...(Psalms and Proverbs...I John 2:16, one of three root sins)

Hard-hearted...(Ephesians 4:18)

Calloused heart...(Ephesians 4:19)

Seared conscience...(I Timothy 4:2)

- **Grace requires HUMILITY:** (James 4:6; Matthew 5:5; I Peter 5:5)

Humility...A wise person recognizing his true condition before God...and in need of God's grace.

Humiliation...A proud person being embarrassed...and rejecting God's grace.