

**Sola Fide – Faith alone**  
**In \_\_\_\_\_ we trust. – Jan 30, 2011**

Unfortunately due to technical issues, we do not have a recording of the message on this day. Below are my preaching notes in rough fashion for any that would like to continue working through the doctrine of Faith Alone. – Pastor Ron

**Introduction:**

- 90% of Americans in a 2003 poll supported the motto on currency.
- What is trust / faith?
- Pew forum - % of Americans that know protestants teach salvation through faith alone
  - Protestant – 19%
  - Catholic – 9%
  - Mormon – 22%
  - Jewish – 10%
  - Atheist/Agnostic – 22%
- Faith / trust / believe – 860 results in Bible  
Justification by faith alone.  
The reformers and Luther called this Christianity’s material principle.  
It is the very substance of what a person must understand and believe to be saved.
  - Luther–faith alone–the article with and by which the church stands, without which it falls.

**because of Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.**

How can we be justified? Saved? What do we have to do?

**Quick historical reminder -**

Catholic Church – saved through the sacraments – communion, baptism.

Starts with baptism – that his when God’s grace is infused on you

Then if you committed sin, you had to do confession

- This is penance – confess, do some works of righteousness, receive absolution
- Works of satisfaction to restore grace
- Not enough grace to save, but to stir God’s grace.
- The catholic church believes that Christ, grace, and faith are necessary for salvation – just not alone – works must be added. They are not sufficient alone.
- Indulgences were part of this system (95 thesis) – even for those in purgatory
- Alms – \$\$\$ pretty much anything the church wanted you to do.
- Purgatory where you could work sins off.
- As a monk, Luther tried this – prayer, fasting, beating his body, confessions for hours at a time, penance
  - The priest finally said for him to stop because he wasn’t doing anything worth confessing!
- No peace even though he tried the good works
- He could not get away from the fact that none of that would justify him.
- Luther studied that justification was not by our own deeds, but by the declaration of God.

- He later said that when he trusted in the Christ who had paid the full price of his salvation, it was as if he passed through the gates of heaven to paradise.

How can we be justified? How can the work of Christ and God's grace come to us?

## 1. **Faith is the only conduit of God's saving work.**

Our Faith is the only channel God has chosen to justify us.

The means by which we are justified.

Not the work of justification, it is our response that God uses.

True faith is all that is required of us.

*Rom 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

*Rom 3:25-26 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—<sup>26</sup> he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who **justifies** those who have **faith** in Jesus.*

Through – instrumentality

**Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"**

Justification – a legal term to declare righteous.

- Act of a judge acquitting an accused person.
- Rom 3:21-26 – Justification is an act of God by which he declares sinners to be righteous

Central to salvation

*Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

Not anything less or anything more

## **So what is faith?**

Definition:

Confident trust in or reliance on. – (Little)

Devotion to

- To trust in someone is to rely on them to do what they say and to completely take care of it.

Saving faith is receiving what God has done for us with no effort of our own (like a gift)

*John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God*

Saving faith has 3 parts

Knowledge, belief, trust

Must have all 3

1. Knowledge – must know the truth – about Christ – about salvation

The facts

- The last few weeks have clearly taught the theology of Christ alone and grace alone
- The church before the reformation suffered from lack of knowledge. Scripture was not known.
- The college professor that teaches a religion class about Christianity, but doesn't believe a word of it.

## 2. Belief - Agreement

Calvin – “it can't just flit around on the top of the brain, it must take root in the depths of the heart.”

But even the demons believe and tremble – they know, they believe  
*Jam 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

*John 5:39-40 You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me,<sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*

## 3. Trust in Christ

Commitment – yielding to Christ

A personal trust and reliance on Christ

This requires volition! It cannot be forced on someone or it is not faith.

- Absolute belief that He will do what He says and He is able to do all things. (Matt 8:8-10) just say the word, and my servant will be healed.
- If I'm trusting the bank to do a refi, I leave it up to them and have confidence that they will do it. HA!
- We all have faith in something
- So not if we have faith, but what is it in.
  - In \_\_\_\_\_ we trust

Not my will.

As such, faith is a matter of decision, not feeling

A choice to trust God and His work rather than self.

Object of saving faith is Christ

When we say faith alone, it assumes Christ alone.

You can have faith in anything – but only one thing saves you.

*1 Cor 2:5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

Faith trusts in and lays hold of a righteousness that is not our own.

*Heb 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

*Gal 2:16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be*

*justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

- Thus, since it was Christ alone (we cannot save ourselves), by grace alone (we deserve nothing), faith is the only way to receive it.
- Cannot trust completely in more than one thing.
  - If I'm checking up on them (banks), I'm not trusting them, but self.

Alone!

Screwtape letters - What we want, if men become Christians at all, is to keep them in the state of "Christianity And." You know--Christianity and the Crisis, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychic Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians, let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian coloring. Work on their horror of the Same Old Thing (Letter XXV).

- Can also mean body of beliefs – Almost always “the faith” when used this way
  - 1 Cor 16:13 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.*
  - 1 Tim 4:6 If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.*
- Can mean trust in God as an attribute of the Christian walk
  - beyond salvation
  - daily walking with God in trust.
  - Eph 6:16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*
  - 1 Thes 3:2 We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith,*

## 2. **Faith is not something you do But it affects everything you do** **Faith is the opposite of works.**

Faith is the absence of my works, not a work.

I give up! I'll stop trying

Faith is not merit – it is an instrument, channel

*Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

- It is not a good work. It is necessary and essential, but it is not a good work. It is not a work at all!

We must not confuse the two. If it is works, and God asks us to have it, we are back to salvation by works.

- This is theologically important because whole systems have been created on the basis that if we have faith, it is a work and thus, God is required to give it to us.

- IT IS NOT A WORK! It is an abandonment of works.

*Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.*

No pride! No spiritual superiority – you didn't do it.  
How do we look at each other?

### 3. **Faith is the abandonment of self and all my own efforts to be righteous**

*Rom 4:3-5 What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”<sup>4</sup> Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.<sup>5</sup> However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his **faith** is credited as righteousness.*

why faith and not love or something else?

Faith is the Exact opposite of depending on self -  
An abandonment of self

Rock climbing – have faith in the gear

- When getting certified at the facility, they give you a test to see if you have faith in the gear
- Now fall. – that's not the goal.
- Guilt comes when we are trying of our own efforts to be righteous.
- Spiritual disciplines are great . . . unless they are self-efforts to be righteous.

*Luke 19:9-14 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner. ’I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

### 4. **Faith does not stop at salvation - It is what we are to live by goes beyond salvation, but for how to live**

*Rom 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “**The righteous will live by faith.**”*

*Gal 2:20-21 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.<sup>21</sup> I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”*

- A. True faith is followed by actions.  
Faith is more than just a mental assent. It must be lived out in actions.

*James 2:17-19 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

Justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone - reformers  
Saving faith changes us! Remember adoption.

○ Many people have a belief in Christ, but not faith and are not saved.

B. Faith allows us to do great things for God

*Matt 17:20-21 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.*

*Heb 11*

C. Faith enables us to forgive

*Luke 17:4-5 If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him. " <sup>5</sup> The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*

Trust and dependence on God

An unforgiving spirit is dependence on self and protection on self.

Well, they don't deserve it – not your call!

Faith in self instead of faith in God.

D. Faith takes the worry out of difficult situations.

*Luke 12:28-31 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! <sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. <sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. <sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.*

*Matt 14:30-31 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

*Matt 8:25-26 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" <sup>26</sup> He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

E. Faith is built through the Word

*Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

Having trouble trusting God? Start spending more time in His Word!

Final note:

- There is a lot people argue about regarding the details
- How God actually saves us involves things that we will never understand this side of eternity.
- We know that we cannot seek God on our own and by His grace He does the work of salvation and enables us to have faith.
- We also know that God clearly calls us to a decision of faith and has chosen this as the conduit for grace. All are responsible for what they do with this decision.
- In reading for this series, I have been amazed at the name calling, leaps of logic, elevation of logic above scripture. Dispensationalists, semi-pelagians, etc. Very little of it was actually accurate. Too many people just want to win.
- When we do that, Satan is winning. Fight amongst yourselves!

Arguing over the details.

[Charles Simeon](#) (the father of Anglican evangelicals) and [John Wesley](#). Dec 20, 1784  
Simeon: Sir, I understand that you are called an Arminian; and I have been sometimes called a Calvinist; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions. Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not first put it into your heart?

Wesley: Yes, I do indeed.

Simeon: And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?

Wesley: Yes, solely through Christ.

Simeon: But, Sir, supposing you were at first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?

Wesley: No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last.

Simeon: Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?

Wesley: No.

Simeon: What then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?

Wesley: Yes, altogether.

Simeon: And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom?

Wesley: Yes, I have no hope but in Him.

Simeon: Then, Sir, with your leave I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.

*Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*