

October we are remembering some of the key truths that re-emerged during the era of the Reformation. A church that had lost her way, was being reformed, re-oriented by the Word of God. A lot of brave men and brave women took their stand, and bravely disagreed with the powers that be.

They worked hard to tear down barriers and walls that kept people from knowing God in a personal way,

layers and layers of religious traditions that complicated and convoluted simple truths-

they worked hard to challenge and confront teachings that were *not only* making things difficult on people, but in many cases were flat out wrong.

In many cases the established church **complicated** the bible's message,

but in some cases they **contradicted** the Bible's message.

out of this period of conflict and confrontation, 5 main slogans emerged, and they were shorthands for some of those major areas of distinction between the established church and the reformers.

Scripture Alone

Grace Alone

Faith Alone

Christ Alone

Glory of God Alone

Today we are looking at the 4th "Christ Alone"

2 things that Solus Christus does not mean:

1) It doesn't mean that the medieval Catholic church didn't believe in Jesus.

It isn't as if Martin Luther and the other reformers "discovered" Jesus - but what they did discover is that Jesus is sufficient to save His people, all on His own, without the mediating work of priests, the ongoing work of sacramental offerings or rites or rituals, or the continuing obedience to the church as a saving institution.

nearly everyone in Luther's parish would have believed in Christ, but the distinction that set the movement apart is the word Alone.

Christ as a feature of your religion vs Christ Alone as our hope for righteousness

(the same goes to all of the Solas so far, the established church believed in scripture, grace and faith, but not ALONE)

2) that we are Father neglecting or Spirit denying.

God exists in Trinitarian unity and community, and everything that He does He does in perfect concert and communion.

When we affirm that "Jesus Saves" *we are not saying* that Jesus saves apart from the involvement of the Father and the Spirit, but *we are saying* that God saves sinners:

The Father sends the Son,

the Son lives dies and rises for the sake of *lost* sinners,

the Spirit grants faith and applies the saving work of Jesus to *saved* sinners.

Today I am not going to say *everything that could be said* about Jesus:

there isn't time, not for me, not for you not for anything.

John's gospel admits that if everything about Jesus were to be written down, then "all of the he world itself could not contain the books that would be written" , so this morning's sermon is certainly not going to cover everything.

Each of these Solas sermons in october are a bit like the wardrobe in CS Lewis' book "The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe" it looks small - but there is an entire universe inside. Scripture, Grace, Faith and especially Christ are such huge topics - by nature the preacher must be selective, and only choosing to say certain things at the exclusion of others.

I want to focus on one aspect of Jesus, namely, that He is the uniquely qualified Saviour of sinners.

That He, and He Alone is able to save
He alone is Willing to save
and He alone is worthy to be praised

Jesus is the only one Able to save :

His divine / human identity means that He is the only one that is able to fully represent humanity before God, and simultaneously represent God to Humanity.

Christmas time is coming up, and it is the annual reminder of the incarnation of God the Son. The rescue mission of lost sinners began with a messy, vulnerable, scary birth of a little boy, to a confused and shamed teenage girl . Why? Why doesn't He just show up on a white horse and rescue us in a spectacular display of strength?

Because the rescue of ruined sinners cannot be from a purely external source. Humanity got itself into this mess, and our rescuer needs to be one of us. To truly identify with us, and (hear this) to really fight on our behalf, the saviour has to fight as one of us.

But - each individual human is disqualified from being the saviour or messiah of the human race, because we each have our own sin which needs to be dealt with. OT Sacrificial system drilled that into their heads that the sacrifice needed to be a spotless lamb, without blemish. No human could offer themselves on behalf of other humans because none of us are spotless, no one is righteous . So God the Son comes, adding humanity to His deity. He comes as God, and yet truly man.

Born of human DNA, a descendant of Adam, a man coming to fight on behalf of men - but yet truly God, sinless, righteous, pure. without spot or blemish.

The eternal son of God, who is and remains true and eternal God took to Himself, through the working of the Holy Spirit, from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, a true human nature so that He might become David's true descendant, like His brothers in every way, except for sin.

to put it simply:

veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail the incarnate Deity
pleased as man, with man to dwell
Jesus our Emmanuel

and as such he is the only one qualified to be that mediator between God and man, since He is both God and Man

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” (1 Timothy 2:5, ESV)

Jesus is the only one willing to save you:

It was necessary, and Jesus was glad to do it.

Not that His act of sacrifice was pleasant, it was far from it, but Jesus decided to go through with it,

“And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”” (Luke 22:39–46, ESV)

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” (Galatians 2:20–21, ESV)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1–2, ESV)

Christian; you are the deliberate purchase of Jesus Christ. you are the joy that was set before Him. Please don't think that He is stuck with you, like some part of a package deal. Or some sort of a guest at His house, and you are only there on some sort of technicality. You are wanted, chosen, loved and invited.

The question for you is; are you willing to come to Him? Are you willing to receive the forgiveness and acceptance that He offers.

Let me say this: there is no reluctance on His part to save.

He doesn't say to us that He is waiting for us on top of a ladder of good works

He doesn't say to us that He will meet us halfway (that would be generous)

He doesn't say He will do most of the work and we contribute what we can (that would be more than kind) like if someone buys dinner at a fancy restaurant for you but tells you to pay the tip

He comes down, all of the way down, tells you that He is alone is able, and that He was more than willing, He has paid the price, all of it, He offers you forgiveness, justification, a perfect CV of righteousness with your name on it, signed with His blood. And it is all yours for the receiving.

We simply extend the empty hand of faith, releasing any claims of worthiness, and opening our hand to receive the free gift, paid in full by another, and it is now ours to claim.

a gift of grace, received by faith.

Are you willing to do that if you have not yet done so? Would you say to Him now in the quietness of your heart; Jesus I need this; Jesus I want this; thank you that You have provided for me what I could not earn, I receive it by faith.

Jesus is the only one worthy of your worship:

Since Jesus is the only One qualified to be your saviour, and the only one willing to save you - it stands to reason that He is the only one worthy of your worship and devotion.

Saved people are thankful people -

worship and devotion is not due to others, that is why we don't sing to, pray to or worship saints, angels or Mary.

No disrespect intended to them; in fact, the most respectful thing that you can do to a person is treat them in the manner that they request;

St Paul rejected the well intentioned impulses that the Christian church in Corinth had when they organised around him and his personality claiming "I am of Paul"

He and Barnabas also rejected the sacrifice and prayers of the citizens of Lystra - tearing open their robes and crying out " we are men of like nature as you, and we bring you good news that you should turn from these things to the Living God, who made heaven and earth and the see and all that is in it!" Acts 14:15

Angels

"Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10, ESV)

Mary:

A faithful woman, who was devoted to God, who was a student of Scripture, who could quote large sections of the OT from memory at the drop of a hat, who was chosen by God to bring the Lord Jesus into our world. We see her eventually as a faithful member of the newly established Christian church in the beginning of Acts, and she is there in the upper room attending a prayer meeting, not being prayed to, but praying with her brothers and sisters in Christ... praying to God the Father in the name of the Son.

During the earthly ministry of Jesus someone tried to give her special honour Luke 11:27

As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and blessed are the breasts that nursed You." 28 But He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."... Jesus gently corrects her. The final words of Mary recorded in scripture is in John 2:5 at the wedding at Cana she tells the servants "Whatever Jesus tells you to do - do it."

So the way that we can truly honour Mary, the Angels and the Saints, is to listen to them. to not give them undue devotion, prayer or praise; and be those that listen to Jesus, obey Jesus, and worship Jesus.

The message of Christ Alone speaks to us about who is able to save you, willing to save you, and also who is worthy of your praise.

These are the traditional religious contenders for worship that is due to Christ alone; but our secular world today has many options on the buffet line of potential idols.