

We want to make much of Jesus - we don't want to simply commemorate the good old days

The reality is, it was a very messy period of history, with some great triumphs, but also a lot of confusion, sin and messiness.

But; some wonderful truths rose to prominence once again, and we've been celebrating those truths for the month of October.

The reason why we've chosen October to focus on this is because October 31, 2017 marks 500 years since a young German monk and college lecturer called Martin Luther, posted a list of disagreements to the door of the Wittenburg church, as a way to spark intellectual debate amongst the priests and seminary students and church hierarchy that would see it.

I know that UCC lecturers and staff have their own internal emails, imagine that one of them went viral. Luther's grievances with the church (mostly to do with the selling of indulgences) were copied, translated, and distributed far and wide, and the ideas that they contained were really the spark that fanned the flame of the reformation.

It caused people to look to the Bible itself, not tradition or church hierarchy, but God's Word itself.

However, this series has not been a commemoration of 95 theses nailed to a wooden door, but it has been a celebration of a Man nailed to a wooden cross.

Hopefully we have made much of Jesus as opposed to some sort of self-congratulatory denominational back patting.

Today we are looking at the 5th and final Sola: Soli Deo Gloria : Glory to God Alone

This is the undergirding or motivating power behind *all of the other 4* solas as well.

If we let scripture alone be our guide, we listen to God's voice above all others. We understand that what God says matters more than anyone or anything else. This gives God the glory He alone deserves, as the heart, voice, and mind that should be regarded above all others.

If we let grace alone be the grounds on which God rescued us through the person and work of Jesus, we understand that it is not by grace and faith, not by grace and good deeds, not by grace and a good heart, and not by grace and human initiative. It is by grace alone. This gives God the glory because He alone gets the credit for the past, present, and future of our salvation

If we let faith alone be our reception of God's rescue, we understand that we don't deserve any credit for what God does for us. We simply receive by faith what He so generously gave to us. This gives God the glory because we understand that we can't save our self; Jesus must rescue us.

If we let Christ alone be our salvation and centre of life, it means that it isn't through a mere man or institution that we are made right with God, it is by the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. This gives God the glory because it properly puts the focus on Jesus, and takes it off everyone and everything else.

Lets look at an example of someone *encountering* the glory of God, how it changed him, and then how he lived for the glory of God alone ever since.

ENCOUNTERING THE GLORIOUS GOD

Isaiah 6:

“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.” (Isaiah 6:1–4)

In a period of national turmoil and grieving the prophet Isaiah is given a heavenly vision, that is to encourage him in his downcast state, and for him to pass on to the nation of Israel.

The reality was, with the death of King Uzziah; good times had died with him.

There was a period of National renewal and stability.

The Celtic Tiger on steroids - The Hebrew Tiger

And now its over, the king is dead, and Israel takes a nosedive.

But in the midst of dark days, Isaiah has this encounter / vision

For two reasons

1. It is his **personal commission** to ministry
 1. there are difficult years ahead for him personally, he will not be popular, he will not be believed, he will not be appreciated.
 2. But he needs to know that he is serving people for the earthly applause or for the glory of his own reputation
He is serving by the commission of God Himself, and He is serving for the glory of the God who sent him.
2. The *Nation of Israel* needs to be reminded that **God is on the throne**
 1. over the next years things are going to go from bad to worse for them
 1. financial hardship is only the beginning, the book ends with them being defeated, displaced and discouraged.
 2. How important for the faithful remnant among them to know that God is high and lifted up, He is not pacing around heaven, nervous about the outcome, He is not wringing His hands or wiping sweat off of His holy forehead - worried about what on earth is going on on earth.
 1. He is in charge. He is sovereign. He is overseeing. He will work all things together for good for those who love Him.

but the main point here is that God is on display as glorious.

I know that “glory” is a concept that a lot of church people are familiar with, but that few of us could define it. And for those are not involved in the life of the church there is even less familiarity with it.

C.S. Lewis in his essay “the weight of glory” says that he couldn’t quite get his head around what glory was either. He thought it had to do with being famous and well known, or it had something to do with emanating light.

We see God being honoured with perfect praise, from perfect beings. The angels never get bored singing to Him and about Him.
they say that He is holy, and that the earth is filled with His glory.
His intrinsic holiness spills out and when that holiness comes out of Him it is called glory.
When God's holiness and goodness goes public, it is called glory.

We think about the best part of something, and the very best part is their "glory"

The glory of a flower is its beauty:
the glory of a strong man is his strength - Jer 9:23
The glory of God is His holiness
The glory of God is His goodness - Ex 33

It is hard to describe, for sure, but it is the best of God, that would be internal and hidden from us, made public. His goodness, His holiness. that is some of what we mean when we say "The glory of God"

The angels declare the glory of God vs 3
the heavens declare the glory of God Psalm 19 etc
and Isaiah wants to declare the glory of God.... but he realises there is a problem .

encountering God's holiness, Isaiah is reminded of His own unholiness.
my lips are unclean, my people's lips are unclean, I am far more comfortable in unholy situations than in holy ones.

THERE IS A WAY FOR INGlorious PEOPLE TO COME TO A GLORIOUS GOD

Isaiah confessed his sin, and was cleansed, then commissioned.
"And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.'" (Isaiah 6:5-7, ESV)

Isaiah knew that there was an incompatibility between the Lord of Glory - and himself. Although it wasn't written yet, he definitely would agree with "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, ESV)

It is Soli Deo Gloria, not Soli MEO Gloria.

And it is dealt with.
This is an OT preview of the NT reality.
although for a permanent, once and for all payment, it isn't performed by an angel, placing a cleansing coal on on man's lips - but it involves the same Lord of Glory described in Isaiah 6, stepping off that throne and coming down to live amongst

Isaiah's people. Among people of unclean lips, and hands, and eyes, head + shoulders+ knees and toes.

John 12 Jesus quotes this passage and says that Isaiah was describing Him. He comes and lives among us, and instead of being defiled/unclean, remains clean and then offers Himself as a sacrifice. Dying and Rising.

And for those that place their trust in Him and Him alone; the word is spoken to you **"Your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for."**

God makes a way for inglorious people to come to Him.

the old testament shadows are varied; the cleansing coal here, the sacrificial system, the tabernacle, all are ways for inglorious people to be cleansed in order to come to a glorious God.

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:12–14, ESV)

WE ARE COMMISSIONED TO ENJOY AND SPREAD THE GLORY OF GOD THROUGHOUT THE EARTH

We are able to enjoy God's glory now.

Johann Sebastian Bach was someone who got this.

His famous compositions all ended with SDG written at the bottom of them. every piece of music he wrote was dedicated to the glory of God.

but - we don't only have to do something magnificent to do it to the glory of God. it ought to be the motive for all that we do.

our work

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23–24, ESV)

our parenting our friendships

our eating and drinking

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31, ESV)

We want to share that glory with others -

Boozum story Tracy experienced and she wanted to share it with Olwyn

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

"the land the Reformation forgot"

pray: Personal and National revival, revitalisation, reformation