

# Sola Fide (Faith Alone)

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Faith / Romans 4:4–5; Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:19–20

We are saved by Faith Alone. What is Faith? (Believing, Obedience, Made Perfect in Christ, Reasonable, Enveloped in Love, at the Heart of Salvation)

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## Faith in the Reformation

The issue of Salvation by Faith alone may have been the most important of the 5 points in the reformation 500 years ago.

- The teaching of the day was that you had to do some things in addition to having faith in order to be saved. Maybe it was baptism, or maybe it was confession, or maybe it was performing certain tasks.

Faith + \_\_\_\_\_ = Salvation

(what was being corrected by the reformers)

- If being saved includes some work that you have to do, then you are at some level saving yourself. And at another level, you have to always wonder if you've done enough to save yourself.
- What we believe is that Faith Alone in Jesus Christ = Salvation.

## Faith Is:

If faith in Jesus is what you need, then we need to figure out what faith is. That's what the sermon is really going to focus on. We are going to look through a photo album of pictures of faith that we find in the Scriptures. Then, we are going to look at how it all works together for a person to be saved.

## Faith is: Believing

There is this amazing story at the end of the Gospel of John concerning one of Jesus' disciples.

- Jesus was crucified on Friday.
  - If you were one of his disciples, could you imagine the depths of despair and hopelessness that your soul would traverse.
  - Thomas knew that Jesus had died. That is what he believed, because that is what he knew. (It's also what was the truth)
- Jesus was raised to life on Sunday Morning, (the third Day)
  - That evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples in a closed room.
  - It was an incredible time, as Jesus entered the room without using the locked door. It was a time of great rejoicing for everyone, everyone but Thomas. Because he wasn't there when Jesus had appeared.
- The other disciples kept calling Thomas, "We have seen the Lord!"
  - But what did Thomas say?
    - If I don't see the mark of the nails in His hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe!" (John 20:25)
    - That's not faith, because its not believing. You can't have faith in something or someone that you don't believe.
  - 8 Days later, the disciples are inside with the doors locked again, and this time Thomas is with them.
    - (Aren't you glad that they let him stick around, even with his lack of faith)
    - Jesus appears again, and we find his words to Thomas in John 20:27

**John 20:27 HCSB**

Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and observe My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Don't be an unbeliever, but a believer."

Thomas responded to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

What's he saying? I believe in you. You are the Son of God. You are the Ruler of All. You are my Lord. You are My God.

Jesus says to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Those who believe without seeing are blessed.

Faith in Jesus is Believing in Jesus. Those who have faith in Jesus Christ can say with Thomas, "My Lord and My God", and they know it to be true.

## Faith is: Obedience

Abraham wasn't always called Abraham, that's not what his parents named him when he was born.

He was born, Abram, his dad's name was Terah. And he was born in a place called Ur, in the land of the Chaldean people.

Abram married Sarai, and the whole family was on their way to the land of Canaan together.

Terah, Abram & Sarai, and also Lot. Lot was Abram's nephew, and Lot's father had died. So Terah, Abrams father, took Lot along with Abram and Sarai on the journey.

But they didn't get to Canaan because of a place called Haran. It was in Haran that Abram's father died at the age of 205.

What happens next in that families life shows us that Faith is Obedience.

### **Genesis 12:1 HCSB**

The LORD said to Abram: Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

God follows up that instruction with an amazing promise of blessing. It was a blessing that would start with Abram, and end with all the peoples on earth being blessed through him.

We know how that promise worked out. God the Father would eventually send Jesus, the Son of God, to earth to bless us with eternal life, salvation, and every good thing. And Jesus lineage is traced all the way back to Abram.

But when God gave Abram the instruction in Genesis 12, Abram didn't know how it was going to play out. He had to believe that it was God speaking to him. He

had to believe that it was truth. And then he stepped out in faith, and that faith is demonstrated by his obedience. He obeyed God by leaving Haran, and heading to Canaan.

**Hebrews 11:8 HCSB**

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and went out to a place he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where he was going.

Faith is Obeying God. If you say that you trust him, and if you say that you believe him, then it makes sense that you will obey him.

## Faith is: Made Perfect in Christ

Next Story, from Mark 9:14. Jesus, Peter, James and John were returning to the rest of the disciples. They had just been up on a mountain, and had heard the voice of God saying about Jesus, “This is My beloved Son; listen to Him”.

When they get to the other disciples, they find a large crowd around them, and there is some sort of a commotion going on. There were scribes, (who were trained teachers of the Jewish law), having some sort of a dispute with those disciples.

When the crowd saw that Jesus was coming, they were amazed and ran to greet him. Jesus wanted to know what the argument was about.

The answer came from a distressed parent in the crowd. Here is what he had to say.

**Mark 9:17–18 HCSB**

Out of the crowd, one man answered Him, “Teacher, I brought my son to You. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I asked Your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn’t.”

This father came looking for help. Can you imagine having a child, and watching him being tormented in such a terrible way. What lengths do you suppose that this fellow would go to to find help. I wonder how long his son had been in torment for? I wonder what it had done to his family's faith in God.

But here the dad was, asking the disciples for help, and they had been unable to do anything. Now, he was explaining the situation to Jesus.

Jesus makes a comment about the unbelief of that generation of people, and then says, “Bring him to Me.”

When they brought the mans son to Jesus, the demon inside of him immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around. There was foam coming out of his mouth.

Jesus asks, “How long has this been happening?”

It turns out that the family had lived with this situation from the boys childhood. The demon had many times tried to destroy him by throwing him into fire or water.

Wow, I feel for that family. That would have been so painful. The father asks Jesus for help. He says, “If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

And then Jesus makes a great statement about faith. You might want to take note of it.

**Mark 9:23 HCSB**

Then Jesus said to him, “ ‘If You can’? Everything is possible to the one who believes.”

Do any of you know what the man replied? He says, I do believe! Help my unbelief.”

A crowd is rapidly forming, as you might imagine with the spectacle that is playing out. Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit saying, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter him again!”

Then it came out shrieking and convulsing him violently. The body became still like a corpse, and many in the crowd wondered if he had survived the experience.

But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

Faith is made perfect in Christ.

The father in Mark 9 didn’t have a perfect faith on his own. He knew that what he was asking God for was bigger than what he thought possible.

But he put his faith in what Jesus could do. He asked Jesus for help. I believe, help my unbelief.

That's allowed with your faith in God. There are going to be times when you don't see everything clearly. You look around, and the problems that you are encountering seem overwhelming.

Hudson Taylor

*Not a great faith we need, but faith in a great God.*

In Mark 9, even though the father was overwhelmed, Jesus was not. Jesus is the Son of God. He was an active participant in the creation of our world. He is the King who is over all kings. He is the one with full authority in this universe. He is not overwhelmed. And he is willing to help us in the times where we cry out, I believe, but help my unbelief.

Our faith is made perfect in Christ Jesus. Because he is the one that we put our faith in. His thoughts are higher than ours. He can understand this world more fully than we can. And where we don't know or see how a situation is going to play out, God knows. And he is faithful.

ILLUSTRATION: Indiana Jones and the Leap of Faith

There is a movie called "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" featuring the daring Indiana Jones. He goes through all sorts of exciting things. The one memory that I have from the movie is where he takes a leap of faith.

Here is how it looks. Indy, as I like to call him, is coming through a door in the side of a stone chasm. There is essentially two stone walls, separated by 30 feet, and Indy has to find a way across.

So he pulls out his little journal, and sees a hieroglyphic of a man standing suspended over the chasm on what must be an invisible bridge.

Indy, gathers from the drawing that what he needs to do is to take a leap of faith. To step out on to nothing, and believe that there will be something there.

So he sticks his leg out, like a person would who was unable to bend at the knees, and when the weight of his body comes down, he finds that he is standing on a sort of invisible bridge. But he's alive, and he makes it to the other side.

That is what a lot of people think of, when they think of faith. But that is not the faith that is presented in the Bible. The faith of the Bible is in Full cooperation with reason.

# Faith is: Reasonable

We don't have to have a blind faith for salvation. We are not hoping against hope that we are right about this, and basing our entire life on earth, and life following this earth on a blind faith.

Blind faith is no faith at all. Because you don't know what or who your faith is based on.

You need both faith and reason working together in your life.

This is known as the Tertullian view. (from the Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible)

Reason without faith may deteriorate into a mere gathering of facts—facts that are never really put together. Faith without reason, on the other hand, can trail off into vagueness and lack of meaning.

So we don't have a blind faith. Instead, we have a faith that is reasonable.

When Paul goes on to explain what is of first importance to the Church in Corinth, he lays out the facts about Jesus. He is not saying, just believe because of all of this emotion and hope. No, he is saying that the Christian faith is completely logical, reasonable and trustworthy.

Here is what Paul says,

## **1 Corinthians 15:3–4 HCSB**

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Faith in God makes sense, because it is true, and because it is reasonable. Our God speaks only the truth, his word his completely trustworthy, and reliable. We don't have to wonder and hope that we are in the right. We don't have to abandon reason, to have faith. Instead, reason and faith work together in our lives.

The flip side to this, is that without the help of God himself, the gospel will feel like foolishness. It won't make sense without God opening up our eyes to see and our ears to hear and our hearts to understand.

## **1 Corinthians 1:18 HCSB**

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

This means that faith is a gift from God.

## Faith is: A Gift

Just looking at all of the facts, truths and promises of God will not be enough for a person to be saved. Instead, it is God at work in a person life, helping them to believe, that brings about their salvation.

Paul puts it this way in Ephesians

### **Ephesians 2:8–9 HCSB**

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— not from works, so that no one can boast.

Don't boast about your faith, because its actually God's faith at work in you. He's the one helping you to believe, and to trust.

Why does God gives us this gift of salvation. Why does he enable us to have faith. It is because he loves us.

## Faith is: Enveloped in Love

Faith starts with God loving us. We are made alive through his love, and the result of our salvation is that we know God's love, and it flows through us.

### **Galatians 2:19–20 HCSB**

For through the law I have died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

What is Paul saying? What does it mean when he says, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

He saying that his life is no longer focussed on what he can do. Paul is no longer interested in promoting Paul. Paul's inner dialogue is no longer concerned with what people think of Paul.

That part of Paul is dead. Now Paul is concerned with what Jesus is doing in his life. Now Paul focusses on how God can be made known through Paul's life. Paul's thoughts are not about self promotion, instead they revolve around Jesus and his gospel. Therefore, Paul no longer lives, but it is Christ living in Paul.

Why? because of Jesus. "...who loved me and gave himself for me."

With that attitude of dying to self and living for Christ Paul became an incredible influence in the world for Jesus, and with that attitude so can you. Its not about me, its all about Jesus.

### **Colossians 1:3-4 HCSB**

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints

Sometimes when you don't feel very loving towards someone, trying praying for them, blessing them, seeking God's favor for them, and see what happens in your heart.

Faith starts with God's love for us, he gives us the faith to believe in Jesus, to trust him with our lives, and to follow his ways.

Our response is one of love. We live our lives in a way that brings God the glory.

## **Faith Alone**

We are saved by faith alone. Its nothing that we can brag about, unless it is in God that we are bragging, because we are simply trophies of his grace. And this is the testimony of those who are saved by faith.

I am justified by God. God sees me with as righteous through the work of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 5:1)

I am reconciled to God. God no longer counts my sin against me, instead he calls me his friend. (2 Corinthians 5:18)

I am redeemed. I am forgiven of my sins, through the death of Jesus Christ, according to the grace that God has lavished on me. (Ephesians 1:7)

I am made alive. I once was spiritually dead, unaware of God's love and God's life, but now I am alive through Jesus Christ, and the life of God is in me. (Ephesians 2:5)

I am adopted into God's family. I am his child, and he loves me dearly. (Romans 8:15-16)

Your faith is a gift from God. Because of his love, we are compelled to share this faith with others. We tell them what God has done for us. We tell them about the good news of Jesus. We help them understand the Bible. But most of all, we pray that God would give them the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, say that they might believe in Him and receive eternal life.