

**Sola Scriptura: Sufficient Grace for Salvation and All of Life (Ephesians 1:11-13)**  
*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on December 12, 2010*  
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<sup>11</sup> *also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,* <sup>12</sup> *to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.* <sup>13</sup> *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth [other translations “when you heard the word of truth”], the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.*

Last week we began looking at the statements of salvation by faith alone (“trust / hope in Christ” in v. 12, and in v. 13 “believed”) and how that relates to God’s sovereignty in v. 11. Today we’re going to focus on an equally important truth in v. 13, how faith comes by hearing the word, and the power of the gospel. Paul used some of the same key words in v. 13 in key verses in Romans:

*“the gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe ...”* (Rom. 1:16)

*“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word ...”* (Rom. 10:17)

The key words in v. 13 we want to focus on today are *word, truth, gospel, salvation, believe / faith, Spirit*. All of these terms have to do with Scripture and are applied in chapter 6. Each of those key words in v. 13 in the first chapter of this letter are also used by Paul in the last chapter, not just for what occurred in our initial salvation, but as an important part of our sanctification, things we are also responsible to put on regularly as soldiers in the Lord’s army.

- *truth* (6:14, first piece of armor, belt that girds the loins)
- *gospel* (end of 6:15, feet always ready to go with gospel)
- *faith* (6:16, noun form of Grk word “believe” in 1:13, here a shield to protect us from what the evil one throws at us, and in context this is faith also based on Scripture as well)
- *salvation* (v. 17, a helmet we put on, implying our thinking also must be protected by God’s truth about our salvation)
- *word* (v. 17b “and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God”—this is the one offensive weapon, others defensive)

What a wonderful application of the same key words in 1:13! Paul gives his own application of those terms in the same book, all different ways to emphasize Scripture in general and its good news in particular, not only for salvation (1:13) but for all spiritual life (chapter 6). We don’t just need the gospel for the day we got saved – we need the gospel every day, to apply it, remind ourselves of it, telling ourselves we are sinners saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and telling others for the glory of God alone. Jesus won the victory in His death so we can be victorious in life. When tempted by Satan, Jesus fought back with Scripture Alone. v. 17 calls God’s Word *the sword of the Spirit* – it’s the weapon God’s Spirit can use in our hands as well. Scripture Alone, Sola Scriptura, is our weapon *and our armor* in this warfare that Paul describes, and it is right after Paul mentions the Word of God as a sword, he asks for prayer for boldness to use it, to speak its gospel truth.

**6:19** *and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,* <sup>20</sup> *for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

We may not be chained to a soldier awaiting possible execution, but if we understand salvation and scripture rightly from chap 1, the power is not in man but is in God *through His Word*, why not make your prayer request this month like Paul's for your coworker, neighbors, unsaved friends/family members, people you'll talk to?

Don't leave the Sword of the Lord in its scabbard this Christmas season. Don't hide it. Unsheathe this saber and let it shine and God's Spirit can unleash its power to stab hearts and save souls as only God can. The Christian life is not a playground, it's actually a battleground. Don't go out unarmed without putting on the Word. This is not to be a concealed weapon we hide as some undercover officer. To repeat Paul again in Romans 1:16 "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ...*"

This is why evangelism is important, and why it's important that we use the Scriptures, because the power is not in the words of man or in the will of man being persuaded by other mere men. It's the Word of God that is living and powerful and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and able to cut through human lies and lame objections and to lay bare a soul before the Scripture's samurai blade, piercing the heart in such a way that one whose sins put Christ on the cross can cry out "*what must I do?*" (Acts 2:37).

It is the gospel that is the power of God for all who believe! Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word (Rom. 10:17). And the gospel is to empower our life after we believe as well, and the faith we need each day is also to come by hearing of the Word of God. The more you hear the Word of God preached, the more your faith comes by hearing it, the more your faith grows and is built up.

Don't misunderstand *sola scriptura* as encouraging *solo Christians* or that Scripture *alone* means *lone-ranger-believers* who just study *alone* without ever committing themselves to a church under the authority of the hearing of God's Word and local church leaders. Sola Scriptura doesn't mean there is no place for commentaries, creeds, confessions, or careful study of other godly teachers, etc.

If you look at Eph. 4:8, God gave gifts to men (v. 8b) including the understanding and teaching gifts *for/in the church* (v.11). Scripture Alone is our authority, but God doesn't leave us alone or without helps to understand. He gives gifts to understand and gifted men to teach the church, beginning in NT times, and the past and today. Ignorance of church history can lead to error or arrogance. It's not more spiritual or healthy to study scripture alone, without the help of pastors/teachers in Eph. 4:11-12 who build up the body of Christ to serve. If you study Eph. 4 further, the ministry model is not that teachers do all or even most of the ministry. The shepherds teach and equip *the believers so that they minister to each other*. Scripture alone is sufficient, but we're not. We need each other. We'll study chap. 4 next year but for today *sola scriptura* in 1:13

1. **In their history**
2. **In church history**
3. **In all of life today and in the future**

## #1. In their history

Ephesians 1:13 begins “In Him, you also” – let’s start with the context, and ask the question, “who is the *you* he’s talking to.” The letter doesn’t start in our text, it starts in v. 1:

**1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, *To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus***

So Paul is writing to a church in Ephesus and this letter probably went first there and then was also a circular letter sent out to others

<sup>13</sup> ... *you also, after **hearing/listening** to the message/word of truth*

These Ephesians believers had heard the Word and they listened to the message, and heard in the sense of heeded and responded to it, they accepted it, received it, v.13 goes on to say they “*believed.*” A parallel that sheds light on many of the same words is 1 Thessalonians 2:13: *when you received **the word** of God which **you heard** from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who **believe.*** (NKJV)

Same key words: *heard, believe, word, truth.* KJV: it “effectually works in you.” Scripture effectively powerfully invincibly works as we believe it and receive it not as the word of men but of God. But if you just come to hear a sermon to go home or to just get a religious duty over with, God’s Word and Spirit aren’t powerfully at work in you.

If you would honestly say you don’t like hearing God’s Word anymore than sitting in a dentist’s office to get teeth pulled, it’s not something you like or want, but have to do and get over with to move on, if that’s your heart, you may not be only wasting your life, some of you *may be* losing your soul? If you have no desire to hear from God and don’t care what He has to say, what gives you the confidence that you know and love Him? If you don’t have any desire to know what God says, are you confident you know or love God? It may be some here are unbelievers who don’t know or love God. If that’s you, hear in the sense that Paul uses the word, listen to and obey the gospel; recognize you’re a sinner, repent of your sins, and receive Christ in faith as your Savior and Lord, trusting in His death as our substitute to save sinners as bad as us. This is the message / word / gospel the Ephesians believed, a word above all earthly powers, the same powerful word in 1 Corinthians 1:18 “*the word...to us who are being saved it is the power of God*”

It’s not just power to save but power to those who are saved. Paul used same phrase from 1:13 “word of truth” in 2 Cor. 6:7: “*by the word of truth, by the power of God...*” (God’s Word=God’s power). If God’s people embrace God’s Word as they hear it preached, the Holy Spirit powerfully works in them like in Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus. If you really come to hear from God very God, and don’t look for something to criticize but something to be convicted over yourself, not listening for what others need to hear but for what you need to hear, if you humble yourself before God’s Word and welcome it and apply it and submit to it and savor it and set your mind on it day and night and seek to be doer of Scripture not just a hearer only ... there is unlimited divine power for your life.

This book has stronghold-demolishing power. The Bible has take-every-thought-captive power. There is marriage-rebuilding power in the Scriptures. Lust-conquering power is available here.

Anger-subduing power is contained in this book. Many can testify of its depression-overcoming power, guilt-delivering power, sinful-habit-breaking power, and soul-transforming power! This is what the original NT readers experienced, and so can we today; all-sufficient power for salvation, life, and godliness in Scripture.

What was “the *truth*” they *heard* in 1:13? In 4:21 Paul uses these same words “heard” and “truth” and explains its content further: 4:21 “... *you have heard Him and have been taught in Him ...*” NKJV: “*have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus*”

And the truth wasn’t just for salvation, it was for transformation of those who are already saved (4:23, the biblical process of change is spiritually renewing our mind by the word of truth from Christ). It was not only sufficient to save them but to change them, all of life.

Biblical change is not change *in circumstances*, but *in you*, even if they don’t. The truth they heard in v. 21 was in Jesus, by Him, of Him, from Him. It was a message centered on Christ. 4:21 doesn’t say “you have heard *it*,” it’s “you have heard *Him*” (Christ, v. 20) and have been taught “*by Him / in Him, as the truth is in Jesus.*”

In 1:13 Paul speaks of the “word of truth” - both of those titles are used of Jesus and by Jesus in John’s gospel: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*” (1:1, 14, and then v. 17) “...*grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*” and then “*I am the way, the truth, the life ...* (Jesus says in John 14:6).

Revelation 19:11 *And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True ... [v. 13] and His name is called The Word of God ... <sup>15</sup> From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.*

That’s the power of the word of our Lord! It’s like a sharp sword. The words that come from His mouth strike down and subdue even nations and all sinners who don’t know Christ will by His words be sent to eternal punishment by the fury and wrath of Almighty God. When the sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lord returns and speaks His Word, Satan doesn’t stand a chance against the word of Christ, one little world shall fell him. And His Word has power to strike down and rule our hearts now.

When Paul wrote to the pastor of the Ephesian church in 2 Tim. 3 he said “All Scripture is God-breathed” (v. 16 NIV) or in the ESV: “breathed out by God” and the same root word speaks of the power of the spoken word of the Lord as the very breath from His mouth: 2 Thess 2:8 *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth ...*

The word of Christ carries great power with it, and the Ephesians had experienced that power in their history hearing Christ’s word. It struck them down, slew their sins, and gave them spiritual life. The gospel of John uses both “word” and “truth” as titles for Jesus, and Paul says the Ephesians heard “*the word of truth*” (1:13) and in 4:21 he explains what they heard was specifically the truth in Jesus.

Paul defines it further in 1:13 “... *the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation* ...” It’s interesting that even in English, the words “gospel” and “truth” are used together, when we speak about some truth that is certain, totally trustworthy, “that’s the *gospel truth*.”

This is the gospel truth: we are sinners who cannot do anything to save ourselves, but God sent His Son to seek and save the lost, and He died for our sins and was buried and rose the third day, and for all who trust Him alone and what He did, if we believe, like v. 13 says, we too, are sealed and secured by the Holy Spirit as God’s redeemed adopted children eternally (G.R.A.C.E.).

Scripture alone tells us salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and for the glory of God alone. That’s the gospel truth, and those are the solas of the Reformation we’ve been studying in Eph.

In the ancient world Paul wrote to gospel was a technical Greek term for "good news of victory." The messenger appears, raises his right hand in greeting and calls out with a loud voice: "rejoice ... we are victorious." By his appearance it is known already that he brings good news. His face shines ... he swings a branch of palms, joy fills the city ... with the thought of victory in battle."<sup>1</sup>

This word Paul uses of our salvation, the good news to proclaim with radiant faces to our world as well, as messengers of the greatest news ever of the greatest victory ever of Christ over sin and death and hell! “Joy to the world! The Lord has come!” Some of our faces betray ourselves when we sing of these things like we’re at a funeral. If we can’t even sing that with a little bit of joy on our face, it’s no wonder our world isn’t so convinced of our supposed “good news” – if it doesn’t seem like we believe it, well then, why should they?

No wonder earth doesn’t receive her king or every heart prepare Him room or the world repeat the sounding joy if there’s nothing they hear to repeat that convinces them it’s worth repeating. How can joy to the world come if we how know the Lord aren’t joyful?

William Tyndale, Bible translator/Christian martyr in Reformation said the word *gospel* in Greek signifies: ‘good, merry, glad, and joyful tidings, that makes a mans heart glad, and makes him sing, dance, and leap for joy.’<sup>2</sup>

Another says<sup>3</sup> *the gospel of your salvation* in v. 13 ‘tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner canceled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone’

All those things took place in the lives of these Ephesians saints when they believed (end of v. 13) and the HS took up residence. Let’s go back to Acts 18 to see the historical background of this verse, because we actually have the record of how this took place.

As Paul told the Romans, “*it is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe.*” And one of the most dramatic illustrations of the gospel-powered salvation and transformation of a people as pagan as any big city in California is ancient Ephesus.

Their story is one of the greatest demonstrations of sola scriptura, in the most un-churched and one of the most ungodly places, the power of Scripture alone to save and sanctify is clearly seen

- without doing door-to-door surveys to find out what the Ephesians would want to hear or see in a church or sermon
- without cultural consultants, clever tricks, or even coolness
- without music that rocked out the Ephesus amphitheater as the key or big mass media or marketing research experts or messages making sure unbelievers don't feel uncomfortable
- without entertaining sinners or the preacher being an expert in all their pagan plays and practices so he can connect ...

In Acts 18:24 we meet a man who may not have been the strongest expert in his sinful culture, but he was very strong in the Scriptures: <sup>24</sup> *Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, **came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.*** <sup>25</sup> *This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus ...* <sup>28</sup> *for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

He had the right weapon, and he knew how to handle it, and he was open to being instructed further to teach more accurately, he kept learning humbly and kept speaking boldly the Scriptures. We have this same weapon, this double-edged sword, that cuts through anything – don't trade it in for a plastic knife you buy at the store! Anything less than Scripture is like bringing a toy sword into battle

In Acts 19:8 Paul comes in with the same sword, in the synagogue for 3 months, then at the end of v. 9 he daily taught the disciples in Tyrannus' school. <sup>10</sup> *This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*

<sup>19</sup> *And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.* <sup>20</sup> *So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. [the sword of scripture alone was piercing the darkness] ...* <sup>26</sup> *“You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods*

The gospel flourished in Ephesus of all places, Scripture alone so impacted that city it became a center of Christianity for centuries beyond NT times and in NT times Paul put his trusted son in the faith Timothy in charge and wrote 3 letters to the church and John wrote another and tradition says Apostle John served as elder there and Paul in later travels went out of his way for those elders.

**20:17** *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. [in v. 20 he describes his ministry of Scripture alone to them in Ephesus]...<sup>20</sup> I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,*

<sup>21</sup>solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

...<sup>27</sup>“For I did not shrink from **declaring to you the whole purpose [or counsel] of God ...** <sup>32</sup>“And now I commend you to God and to **the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

That’s the history behind Ephesians 1:13 “you heard the word of truth.” They had heard the Scriptures mightily preached by Apollos proving Jesus is the Christ, and they had heard Paul teaching in the synagogue several Sabbaths and then the disciples devoted daily to hear him teach God’s Word in the lecture hall, and they applied the truth, repenting of their sins, renouncing publically their false ways and ruining in the process the business of sin they once involved in as they realized their former worship and focus was empty, lifeless. If you ever doubt the power of scripture alone, read again, friend!

The sword of the Word of God was getting to the heart and cutting deep into the culture to the point that sinful industries were being affected as people getting saved were no longer supporting them!

What a glory it would be if the gospel was saving so many people that the abortion industry and pornography industry and divorce courts start losing money! But that doesn’t happen by political tea parties or rallies with Mormon or non-Christian talk show hosts or anything other than the true gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed and lived! Activism may change laws, Scripture Alone changes lives! We don’t need a more moral America going to hell or a better economy to mask our spiritual bankruptcy – we need the gospel of v. 21 to be testified: repent before God and put faith in Jesus! We can crusade about family values, how’s the church family doing?

See, it starts in churches and your homes (v. 20 “publically and from house to house”) God’s Word being brought to bear, not just in the hearing of it, but in the doing of it, and in the speaking of its truths to others and not holding back or shrinking back from anything that is profitable (2 Tim 3:16 says “All Scripture is ...”). God’s whole counsel (v. 27) must permeate our whole life, and as v. 32 says, it is “*the word of God’s grace which is able to build you up*” – the word saves and sanctifies and is sufficient for all of life. Scripture alone transformed the Ephesians in their history, and also ...

## #2. In church history

Scripture alone in Ephesus, was the baton passed from Apollos to Paul to Timothy to John and others, and Christianity spread from Ephesus to other parts of ancient Asia Minor to the church fathers and eventually even to our forefathers in America, the baton that is none other than the sword of the Lord. A church father Athanasius wrote often on the sufficiency of Scripture:

‘holy Scripture is of all things most sufficient for us ...’

‘divine Scripture is sufficient above all things ...’

‘Let us learn only the things that are in Scripture. For sufficient and adequate are the things therein.’<sup>4</sup>

Augustine: ‘I also have not been without some whose footsteps I follow in that which I have maintained. At the same time, as I have said already, it is to the canonical **Scriptures alone** that I am bound to yield such implicit subjection as to follow their teaching’<sup>5</sup>

“Scripture(s) alone” isn’t a phrase invented later in church history as a weapon in the fight against Roman Catholicism, the phrase comes right out of the words of St. Augustine who Rome claims as their own father of the faith. Thomas Aquinas, another theologian Rome considers one of theirs, used the phrase even in the 1200s: *sola canonica scriptura est regula fidei* = ‘only canonical Scripture the rule of faith.’ Even Thomas Aquinas used *sola scriptura* in a sentence.<sup>6</sup> Alternate translation ‘the canon of *scripture alone* is the measure of faith.’<sup>7</sup>

The Reformers in the 1500s didn’t reinvent the theological wheel, they came to turn it back to where it was, to re-orient the ship to steer away from tradition that had shipwrecked the faith and to re-calibrate the compass back to the north star of the light of scripture. As the gospel spread across the shores of Europe, the soldiers of the Lord’s army all had the same weapon, the sword of the Lord, the sword our Lord used to defeat Satan in the desert: *it is written*.

Steve Lawson says *sola scriptura* ‘rallied the hearts of all who marched in this grand movement ... and it led an advance that literally altered the direction of Western civilization and changed the course of world history. This battle cry, *sola scriptura* ... uniquely became the defining *sola* of the Reformation. This was the watershed issue at the base level. This was the critical point. This was the determining factor. The Reformation in the beginning was an issue over authority in the church ... Rome said authority rested with the Bible *and*: the Bible *and church tradition*, the Bible *and [Catholic church] councils*, the Bible *and [the Pope’s] edicts*. And to this the Reformers said No! The sole authority and ultimate authority in the church is the Bible *alone* not the Bible *and*. For Rome, the fact is this little word “and” became the tail that wagged the dog. This little word “and” became the competing authority over the Word of God. Because of this little word “and,” church tradition presided over the Word ... councils ruled the Word of God and the Pope took precedence over the Word of God.

[On October 31<sup>st</sup> of this year I shared with you what Martin Luther did on Oct. 31, 1517, and theologians say the material cause of the Reformation that followed was this principle: *sola scriptura*] September 1519, a dramatic encounter took place between Luther and Johannes von Eck at Leipzig. In this exchange, Eck drew out of Luther these 2 admissions: not only could the Pope err, but the church councils *could err* and *have erred*. It was here at Leipzig that Luther made this clear and unmistakable assertion that the Bible is the authority in the church. In April 1521 Luther was summoned to stand before the Diet of Worms and the primary issue on the table was *sola scriptura*. And for Luther, this was the hill worth dying on. Luther stood *sola*, Luther stood alone before the church authorities and before Charles V the Emperor ...

Luther: “I do not trust either in the Pope or in church councils, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted each other ... Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures and by plain reason, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”<sup>8</sup> [Lawson adds “game on!”]

And with these courageous words, *sola scriptura* was in the public debate and was in the ears of German people and soon it spread to the surrounding nations, to France, to Switzerland [and] crossed the English channel into Scotland and into England [with John Calvin, John Knox and Ulrich Zwingli taking up the sword of *sola scriptura* in the battlefields of their land] ...

Holland came under the sway of *sola scriptura* until it washed up on the shores of America in the hull of the Mayflower as the Pilgrims came seeking religious freedom ... wanting to worship God according to *sola scriptura* [one of my great ancestors Pastor Brewster was among those] ... The Bible was translated into the language of the people. The Bible was preached as the centerpiece of the worship service ... the pulpit was literally moved to the middle of the building so that every sight-line in the entire worship sanctuary would intersect at this sacred desk upon which there was an open Bible. Bibles were printed with study notes at the bottom of the page ... Pastors began to exposit through books of the Bible [preach verse-by-verse expounding/explaining each text and context and words in the way God inspired them] ... the hard sayings of Christ were proclaimed, and not only did they stand on *sola scriptura*, they stood on *tota scriptura*, [the total Scriptures, cover-to-cover] all of Scripture! The full counsel of God, from chapter 1 verse 1 of a book to the very ending of that book, no bullets would be dodged. No subject would be left unaddressed. All that the Scripture taught was brought to bear upon their lives and upon their heart.’<sup>9</sup>

That type of thing didn’t just happen in Bible times, Nehemiah’s day or the extraordinary first church in Jerusalem among the Jews, it also happens with Gentiles in Ephesus, England, and it can happen again in El Dorado County. We’ve looked at *sola scriptura* in *their history* (Ephesus), and in *church history*, now thirdly and finally the power of scripture alone ...

### **#3. In all of life today and in the future**

All of Scripture is not only authoritative, it’s all-sufficient for all of life all the time and until the end of time. All of us can find all we need for spiritual life and godliness in the Word of Almighty God. Voddie Baucham says “all day, every day, and twice on Sundays.” But many who affirm Scripture alone on paper don’t in practice. In the Cambridge Declaration, by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, there is a good modern statement of the historic *sola scriptura* doctrine and a call for Bible-believers to reaffirm the sufficiency of Scripture:

Scripture alone is the inerrant rule of the church's life, but the evangelical church today has separated Scripture from its authoritative function. In practice, the church is guided, far too often, by the culture. Therapeutic technique, marketing strategies, and the beat of the entertainment world [and many more examples, but instead of] ... adapting Christian faith to satisfy the felt needs of consumers ... Scripture must take us beyond our perceived needs to our real needs and liberate us from seeing ourselves through the ... images, cliché's, promises, and priorities of mass culture. It is only in the light of God's truth that we understand ourselves aright and see God's provision for our need [i.e., our true problem and God's true solution]. The Bible, therefore, must be taught and preached in the church. Sermons must be expositions of the Bible and its teachings, not expressions of the preacher's opinions or the ideas of the age. We must settle for nothing less than what God has given. We reaffirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured. We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience ...’<sup>10</sup>

We’ve been studying these 5 “solas” for the past several weeks:

- Sola Gratia (grace alone – Eph. 1:2-5)
- Soli Deo Gloria (God’s glory alone – v. 6)
- Solo Christo / Solus Christus (Christ alone – v. 7-10)
- Sola Fide (faith alone) and Sola Scriptura - v. 11-13

Really vs. 11-13 alone re-summarizes these 5 “solas” / alones:

- v. 11 “... *having been predestined*” (that’s grace alone)
- v. 12b “... *to the praise of His glory*” (God’s glory alone)
- v. 13a “*In Him*” (Christ alone)
- “... *when you heard ... believed*” (faith alone)
- “... *the word of truth*” (Scripture alone)

The “*word of truth*” Paul speaks of here is not just for salvation but for all of spiritual life. He used the same phrase in his last letter to the church of Ephesus to pastor Timothy, Paul’s last letter ever

2 Timothy 2:15 *Be diligent* [KJV “study”, i.e., diligent study] *to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth ...*  
**3:16** *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*<sup>17</sup> *so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

Every good work for every man or woman of God, everything we need for every aspect of spiritual life and godliness: *sola scriptura*. Do you believe that? Do you listen to ‘the word of truth’ during the week or do you listen to your feelings (v. 13 *listen* = obey/follow)? Is it ‘the word of truth’ or ‘the word of you’ that you hear/believe? Do you just listen to yourself or speak God’s truth to your soul? Do you study diligently and seek to apply it even more diligently?

Joel Beeke writes of how God applies His written Word so that we are enabled to rest in His Living Word (Jesus Christ), no matter what we feel or where we fail, scripture alone has sufficient grace:

‘Are they nothing but *sin*? Christ became sin on behalf of His people to redeem them from it (2 Cor 5:21).

Are they *lawbreakers*? Christ is Law-fulfiller (Matt 5:17).

Are they *separated from God*? Christ was forsaken of His Father as Judge so that they may never be forsaken of Him (Matt 27:46).

Are they *unrighteousness* itself? Christ is the all-righteous one ... a perfect robe of righteousness through active and passive obedience (Isa 61:10).

Are they *cursed*? Christ died the accursed death as Curse-bearer of His elect (Gal 3:13).

Are they under Divine *wrath*? Christ is Peace-meritor, Peacemaker, Peacekeeper, and Peace-applier (Isa 53).

Are they *hell-worthy*? Christ [for His people conquered death and] hell to prevent a hell-going people from coming there forever (Luke 22:44).

Are they condemned by the *attributes of God*? In Christ "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps 85:10).

Are they *foolish*? Christ is Wisdom (Prov 8).

Are they *filthy*? Christ is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26).

Are they [*tempted*]? Christ was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

Are they spiritually *poor*? Christ, who was rich, became poor so that through His poverty they might become rich (2 Cor 8:9).

Are they in spiritual *bondage*? In Christ there is liberty, for "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Are they [feeling] *weakness*? Christ is Strength (1 Sam 15:29).

Are they *prayerless* and *thankless*? Christ is the praying and thanking High Priest, sitting at the right hand of the Father, who never ceaseth to make intercession for His people" (Rom 8:34).

Are they *restless*? Christ, who went without rest for 33 years, is now sitting on His throne of rest, causing His people to rest in Him as the Priest who has paid everything, as the Prophet who teaches everything they need to learn, and as the King who takes over everything on their behalf. There is no end to it. The Word of God reveals Christ [the Great Physician with] a medicine cabinet out of which the Holy Spirit, through the instrument of faith, administers healing and remedy for every or any disease that afflicts Jehovah's sheep [spiritually]. Faith trusts that for sin-black creatures there is a blood-red satisfaction and a white-robed righteousness available in and through Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, "euagellion."

<sup>2</sup> William Tyndale, cited by [preceptaustin.org](http://preceptaustin.org)

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Simpson, in *10,000 Sermon Illustrations* (Galaxie Software)

<sup>4</sup> As cited by James White, in *Sola Scriptura: The Protestant Position on the Bible* (Soli Deo Gloria, 2000), p. 50, 51, 62.

<sup>5</sup> *NPNF*, Vol. 1, p. 358, Letter 82.3.24.

<sup>6</sup> As cited by William Webster, *Holy Scripture: The Ground and Pillar of Our Faith*, volume 2, page 87-88.

<sup>7</sup> Latin does not have an article and can be translated "a/the" according to <http://turretinfan.blogspot.com/2009/12/aquinas-rule-of-faith-sola-canonica.html>

<sup>8</sup> Alternate versions of the quote exist, depending on source and translation.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Lawson, "Sola Scriptura" ([www.sermonaudio.com](http://www.sermonaudio.com))

<sup>10</sup> The Cambridge Declaration, Published by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, 1996, for full text and background, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge\\_Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_Declaration)

<sup>11</sup> Joel Beeke, *Jehovah Shepherding His Sheep* (Grand Rapids, Mich.), p. 86-87.