



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden
From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

God's precious and exceedingly great promises in hard times

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

October 31 is Reformation Day, the day Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany. This occasion gives us an opportunity to remember some of the great truths of Scripture that had been lost and were recaptured by the many great reformers God raised up. Through our devotionals this week I finish our focus on the five solas or five onlys that summarize the Reformation.

Scripture alone (sola Scriptura) · Christ alone (solus Christus) · Grace alone (sola gratia) · Faith alone (sola fide) · God's glory alone (soli Deo gloria).

Scripture

Reflections on "Faith alone" in Scripture.

Romans 3:21-26

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Romans 4:1-9

¹ What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. ⁵ And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, ⁶ just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

⁷ "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

⁸ blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

⁹ Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.

Romans 5:1-2

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 8:1-4

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Galatians 2:16

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Philippians 3:9

Be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Hebrews 11:17-19

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ¹⁹ He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

Song

***Psalms 59:16** But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.*

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
To Thy fountain Lord I fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Prayer

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Prayer: Holy Father, greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends. Greater love has no God than this that you should send your Son to die for us. Thank you for the perfect and complete atonement Christ made for us on the cross and for His blood shed for our sins. You thought of everything, you appeased your just and righteous wrath, you satisfying your need for justice, paid the full debt owed, you received from Christ sufficient blood to cover all the sins of all the elect, you counted us righteous by the imputed righteousness of Christ and you declared us obedient to the law because of the perfect obedience of Jesus.

Father, this is too much for us to fully understand. How can we respond but to ask you to receive our wonder, awe and adoration; receive our poor love; and receive the offering of our lives to you to do with as you please for your glory. You have bought us, we are yours, no more will we live for ourselves. Make us to be sin-hating and Christ-loving, and may His righteousness be reflected in all we say and do. Increase our faith and our trust in you and in you alone.

Receive our imperfect, and unworthy love and gratitude for your perfect and unfailing love and kindness shown to us in Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.