

Reformation Sunday  
“Solus Christus”  
Exodus 12  
Mr. Bruce Stallings  
October 25, 2015 – Evening sermon

There are five solae that came out in the Reformation day but they didn't all exist in that terminology at the point of the Reformation but they came out of it. There is sola Scriptura where Scripture alone is our only rule of faith and practice. There is sola gratia which is saved by grace alone. There is sola fide which is by faith alone. There is solus Christus which is in Christ alone and then sola de Gloria that God and God alone may be glorified. In this study we'll focus on solus Christus, in Christ alone, only in Christ. As we're drawn to the Table by the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God it is our focus to exalt Christ because He told us to come to the Lord's Table. We are to do this in remembrance of Him and to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

In Exodus 12 we find the beginning of communion for us for it is the Passover celebration. Exodus 12:1–14, 21–28 says [1] *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, [2] “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. [3] Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. [4] And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. [5] Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, [6] and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.*

[7] *“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. [8] They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. [9] Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. [10] And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. [11] In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. [12] For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. [13] The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.*

[14] *“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.*

[21] *Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. [22] Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. [23] For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. [24] You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. [25] And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as*

*he has promised, you shall keep this service. [26] And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' [27] you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'"* And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. [28] Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

So the Lord institutes His Passover and uses it to release the Israelites from their slavery. This is a wonderful symbolism for us as we are released from our slavery to sin. He tells them to explain this to their children and He is very specific in the way they are to do this. This is to be kept forever. So generation after generation is to keep this Passover in this manner in the way that the Lord said it was to be kept. This was the first Passover instituted.

In Numbers 9:1–5 it says [1] *And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, [2] "Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. [3] On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its rules you shall keep it."* [4] *So Moses told the people of Israel that they should keep the Passover. [5] And they kept the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the people of Israel did.*

This was a good start. We did it when we were supposed to and how we were supposed to, as the Lord said. Let's fast forward to the book of Joshua. Joshua is leading the nation of Israel and they are about to go into the Promised Land. In the Exodus passage He says 'when you enter the land that I am giving you be careful to keep what I have told you to do.' As long as you are in a position of desperation before the Lord you are more apt to do what God tells you to do. So Joshua is about to take the people across the Jordan River to go into the Promised Land. We find that as they camp at Gilgal they celebrate the Passover. Why? It is because it is the first month on the fourteen day. What a coincidence that they would be there to celebrate the Passover right before they go into the Promised Land. As they celebrate the Passover there that signifies the ending of the manna from heaven. So the manna ceases and it says they ate of the produce of the land. So you see this primary role the Passover is taking in the lives of the followers of the Lord.

Then a time period goes by and they go into the Promised Land. The Lord helps them conquer the land that is the Promised Land and then all of a sudden we don't hear much about the Passover or the nation of Israel in a positive way. Then it says in II Kings 23:21–22 [21] *And the king (Josiah) commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant."* [22] *For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah.* So they have failed to keep the Passover.

How can you fail to keep the Passover? I read that and it's mind boggling to me. Does someone think that when God said to keep this forever that He meant that as a figurative term? Perhaps someone decided to do it a long time and that was sufficient. Or did an elder stand up in a session meeting and say 'I move that we cancel Passover'? Of all the instructions that the Lord gave to them, of the reality of their own history of being released from slavery and now being in the Promised Land and they were to do this one feast to remind them of how the Lord took them from slavery into the Promised Land, if they didn't do it they would forget the bitterness they had while in slavery and what it was like to wander out in the wilderness. So how does an entire nation quit doing the Passover?

I would suggest that the Supreme Court of that nation didn't make a ruling that it was illegal to not do the Passover. It wasn't that someone threatened them that if they didn't do it they would be killed. I think they just began to compromise little by the little the whole initial process of the Passover where things would get left out and eventually to the point where they didn't do it all. They neglected things about it little by little and the second time you neglect what God calls you to do is a lot easier than the first time. By the tenth time you neglect to do what you are supposed to do then it becomes common place not to do it all. So not only have they neglected to keep it but they seem to be okay with neglecting to keep it.

We see this type of reference in the book of Nehemiah when they understand that they have not kept the Feast of Booths as a part of the celebration and they can't remember why they stopped. They just quit being faithful to some aspect of God's Word over a period of time and they quit embracing and celebrating that.

I don't think it's a coincidence because I don't think anything is a coincidence especially when they had judges and kings. When you don't have a judge or a king and when you're a nation under God that you can't see so you have to live by faith and walk in trust of that God every day, then you begin to want to be like everyone else and we know that is true of the Israelites. They looked around and saw everyone else had a king and they wanted one too. During that time you see Israel embracing the religions of the people that they conquered which sounds as foolish as I just said it and they began to worship other gods. They began to wander away from the Lord to the point that now they no longer celebrate Passover.

As you continue into the New Testament something good must have happened because you find the Israelites are celebrating Passover. John writes that Jesus in the first part of His ministry went into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He goes into the temple and actually turns over the tables. Now this happens two times where Jesus does this. He does it at the beginning of His ministry and at the end of His ministry during the last week of His life which is where Jesus changes the Passover to the Lord's Table. In Luke 22 Jesus takes this benchmark event that has been commanded for them to celebrate and explains to them why it has been so important. This wasn't just a ritual you were supposed to be keeping. When they were wandering out in the wilderness the Lord was trying to point them to Christ.

Luke 22:7–20 says [7] *Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. [8] So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." [9] They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" [10] He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters [11] and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' [12] And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." [13] And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.*

[14] *And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. [15] And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [16] For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." [17] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. [18] For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." [19] And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [20] And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."*

In Paul's letter in I Corinthians 11 he gives more explanation of this which is the passage we use to instruct us on communion. Paul says in I Corinthians 11:26 [26] *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* So we receive an instruction from Jesus of do this in remembrance of Me where we are not to forget and we receive an instruction from God through Paul that says when we do this we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. That doesn't mean you proclaim the fact of the Lord's death. He is not saying that you could forget that Jesus died. He is telling us to proclaim the purpose of the Lord's death and that when we come to the Table we proclaim the purpose of Christ's death for all of us. That purpose is described in I Timothy 2 and many other places in Scripture.

I Timothy 2:5–6 says [5] *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.* That is the foundational passage of Solus (only) Christus (Christ). It is only Christ. There is only One Mediator between God and man. Why do we need a mediator between God and man? It is not simply because we wouldn't understand God. That word goes far beyond what you might think it goes for mediator. It is really a reconciler. There is One Reconciler (Person) between God and man because we're at odds. It is because God is perfect and holy and man is sinful therefore there must be reconciliation that takes place between God and man.

In II Corinthians 5:17–21 it says [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* Only Christ – Solus Christus – is our Reconciler unto salvation.

He alone is our ransom for He gave Himself as our ransom. Ransom is an interesting word in the Greek. When we think of ransom we probably think of someone getting kidnapped and if you hand over so much money then you'll get this person back. Ransom in the Greek comes from two different words – anti and Lutron. Anti means the opposite of or instead of or because of. Lutron is a redemptive price, a price is paid instead of you. Figuratively it speaks of the atonement of Christ. He is our ransom, our redemptive price. It doesn't mean He had the riches to pay a redemptive price but He is the redemptive price. He becomes sin for us. He doesn't pay the price in terms of something externally but the payment of the price is Himself. I Timothy says He willingly gave Himself and only Christ is worthy to do that.

Revelation 5:1–4 says [1] *Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. [2] And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" [3] And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, [4] and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.* We are the scrolls and he weeps because it means cannot have salvation, nobody would be saved.

Revelation 5:5–10 says [5] *And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." [6] And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which*

*are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [7] And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. [8] And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [9] And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, [10] and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Amen!*

This is declaring that Christ alone is worthy to open the scroll and once they acknowledge Him to be worthy of that they sing a new song, a song that could have never been sung before...*[9] And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, [10] and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."* Amen! What a powerful passage!

In I Timothy it says He ransomed for all and in Revelation we see that He was a ransom for every tribe, language, people and nation. Solus Christus – only Christ is worthy to grant to us salvation and can ransom people from all nations. Salvation is found only in Him. He is not only our Reconciler unto salvation but He is our only Reconciler unto sanctification. Once we become a Christian the problem is that we sin again. We are not perfect and the Lord forgives us of our sins. We are a believer, secure and cannot lose our salvation yet we sin again. Once again only Christ is the answer for that sin and the only One who can sanctify us.

As we come to the Lord's Table we realize by the instructions that He not only reconciles us to God and unto sanctification but He reconciles us to each other. When He tells us to come to the Table He tells us to come as a family. He tells us to come to the Table together and then He gives us a caution – if you sin against your brother then leave the table and be reconciled to your brother first, then come back to the table or if you find that your brother has aught against you then leave the table and be reconciled to your brother, then come be reconciled with Me. Christ is not just simply reconciling us to God but He is reconciling us as a family, a family of believers – the invisible church family where we are all together one, unified in Christ. We have been called to be reconciled in Christ to one another.

I believe as you go through these passages there is caution that rings forth throughout. The caution is this. The people who first celebrated the Passover eventually quit doing it. Those who had received the instructions of communion, their descendants altered the meaning of it. The Lord's Table is a piece of the Reformation. They were still celebrating communion but they had to redefine the meaning of it when they said that the bread would actually become the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ. The motivation behind that was that Christ's blood wasn't enough. So now you need more than what was provided previously. It's another work, another mystical thing that you need to experience in order to really be connected to God. That is not what we do at the Table.

We do not come to the Table to get another mystical experience with God so that we'll feel better about our relationship with Him. We don't come to get a new dispensing of grace that they thought they were receiving by the blood and the body. We don't come to get that because Solus Christus. We have everything that we need because of what Christ has done on the cross. There is no need for any other work or anything to be put before us. We come in remembrance of what Christ has done. We come in proclaiming the death and to clarify and to purify the message of salvation. When we participate in the Lord's Supper we proclaim His death until He

comes. We remind ourselves of the Gospel and we instruct those that might be in our presence when we do this that might not know the Lord of what the true Gospel is. The true meaning of the death of Christ is that we needed to be reconciled to God and only by faith and trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior would we truly be reconciled to Him.

I think there is a message in this abandoning that we see not only in the Reformation and the Old Testament but I think there is a caution for us that we need to be careful not to abandon the meaning of the communion as well. We should not wander away from that but we acknowledge before our Lord and each other that we are prone to wander. So there by the grace of God go I. Would we really abandon communion at Briarwood? I can't see that happening for we are going to build it into the schedule, participate in it but we could wander from the meaning, perhaps not by a corporate act but by a personal act.

God says only Christ but we don't live in an only culture, for we're not only people but option people. We live in Birmingham, Alabama in the United States of America. My DirecTV has a thousand channels. Do you know why DirecTV has a thousand channels? It is because our culture will pay for it. Do you know why Krystal's sells hushpuppies? It is because people pay for it and they want options. They want to get a burger and a hushpuppy. Who wants to do that? There are enough people that want to do that and so our culture says they will provide it. We live in a culture of options and those options aren't just external. Look at worship across America. We want something to fit just the way we want it to fit and that's our Americana creeping into our Christianity. That is not our Christianity speaking to our Americana. We are people that want options and we have to be very, very careful.

God has declared to us the purpose and the reason for this Table. He invites us to this Table and as we prepare to come to the Table we need to ask – Solus Christus, is only Christ enough for you? I was sitting in a counseling session with Pastor Reeder as he was counseling a man in our church who had been guilty of being involved in an affair. Pastor Reeder asked him, "Why is Jesus not enough for you?" I thought "Harry, I don't think you understand what he is doing. It's not that Jesus isn't enough for him but it's that his wife isn't enough for him." I listened as he counseled this man and Harry went on to say "You want Jesus plus pleasure, you want Jesus plus success, you want Jesus plus reputation and so why is Jesus not enough for you?" This is a pondering question we need to ask ourselves as we come to the Table to proclaim the real purpose of the death of Christ.

Is Jesus enough for us? Is it really only Christ for us at this Table? Are we so focused upon just Christ that all the rest of the things of this world grow strangely dim and our passion and appetite for them fall away? Do not be deceived for the second lie is easier than the first lie. The tenth lie just seems common. The second look is easier than the first look. The tenth look is just what everybody does. The second gossip is easier than the first gossip but by the tenth gossip that is just fair conversation. The second murmur is easier than the first murmur but the tenth murmur is just our right and privilege. The second altering of God's Word is a lot easier than the first altering of God's Word. By the tenth altering of God's Word, it's what the Word really means. That slippery slope plays out in our life. It's easy for us to move away from the true purpose and declaration of what communion is designed for us to do.

Let's ask the Lord as we come to the Table to reveal our own hearts to us. Lord, please don't allow us in this time of preparation to compare ourselves to the world or to the church or even to other members but allow us to compare ourselves only to Christ and what You have put before us as the example – Solus Christus. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Most gracious heavenly Father, how we thank You for Christ. Lord, we could never articulate accurately our gratefulness for Christ in Christ alone. Thank You that He is worthy for our salvation and that as Your Spirit draws us to the Table that it is about Christ and only Christ. Lord, I pray that as we take time to prepare, to confess our sins, would Your Spirit give us insight into our own thoughts, attitudes and acts. As we humbly come before You simply answer the question – is Christ enough in our lives? Lord, if there by anything else we desire other than Christ may You receive it and tear it down as an idol temple in our life, for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.