

“The Eternal Solas”

One of the hallmarks of the Reformation are the SOLAS – which is a Latin word for ALONE. Sola Gratia, Sola Fidae, Sola Scriptura – the preaching of God’s truth that salvation is by Grace alone, through Faith alone, as revealed in Scripture alone. And to this we might add two more SOLAS – in Christ alone, and to the Glory of God alone.

At this time in the Church Year when the focus is on the Lutheran Reformation, the exhortation is that we would “Dare to be Lutheran” – to boldly and faithfully confess the Reformation Solas. And yet, the Solas belong to God. They are His truth for all Christians – for all people – for they are His Eternal Solas.

Martin Luther was fond of speaking of the Church as a “mouth house” – a place of preaching – and therefore, also a place of hearing God’s Word. The Scriptures declare: “Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim ...”

An angel is a “messenger” – one who is given a message to preach – and this angel is given an “eternal gospel.” This “good news” is from God Himself – and because it is eternal – it does not “roll with the changes” – it does not change with the times or the culture.

It is ALWAYS good news – the good news of forgiveness, life and salvation that is found in Jesus Christ alone – and is delivered to all who believe God’s message. What God preaches to you today, He preached to Adam and Eve – to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – to Mary and Joseph – to the apostles – and to all with ears to hear. He preaches this Gospel to the ends of the earth, and to the end of time.

In every age God calls His preachers to preach this eternal gospel “to those who dwell on earth ...” His gift of salvation in Jesus Christ alone is always true – but He preaches it for the benefit of “those who dwell on earth” – to the living, not the dead. So NOW is the time to preach and hear the Gospel – NOW is the day of salvation.

And so that you realize that this Gospel is FOR YOU – that no one is excluded – God commands that His Gospel is to be preached to “every nation and tribe and language and people.”

No matter WHO you are – or WHAT your situation is – God is FOR YOU. “There is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ...” It is a universal Gospel – it is FOR ALL – and yet, it is exclusively found in Christ Jesus alone.

The Reformation is not about saving Germans, or Lutherans – but sinners. God, in His grace, used Dr. Luther and the other reformers to preach His life-giving Word into a world that seeks to be saved in other ways. As it is in every age – the Gospel must continue to pierce the darkness of our own days.

Dearly beloved, this treasure is FOR YOU and for your family – so that you may cling to the Scriptures ALONE – which points you to Jesus Christ ALONE – in whom there is salvation by Grace ALONE, through Faith ALONE.

God is speaking to everyone when the angel says: “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come, and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.”

God’s Word shakes our perception of His judgment – because we think of it as something that only happens on the Last Day, or in the hour of our death. But God says that “the hour of His judgment HAS come.”

Today, and every day, we stand before His judgment seat – and on some level we know this. You are constantly in the court room – wondering what God thinks of you – and what your fellow man thinks of you. It’s how you live your life. His judgment impacts your thoughts, words, and deeds.

You fear what God and others think of you – so you are constantly offering up a defense for your sin – making excuses, blaming others – trying to justify yourself to your spouse, your parents, your boss, your friends – to God.

Dearly beloved – “Fear God and give Him glory.” When you try to convince others (and yourself) that you have not sinned and fallen short – you are robbing God of His glory. His glory is to justify THE SINNER – to forgive sinners – to save sinners. If you say you have no sin – then you are saying that you don’t need God, and His glory.

The Scriptures teach us that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). That’s FAITH – faith ALONE – which looks to Jesus Christ ALONE – to be saved by His gracious forgiveness ALONE.

And that is why our text also speaks of the worship of Him who made heaven and earth. The highest form of worship is to receive what He promises and offers – to live by faith in His promises – to treasure, and receive, His gift of forgiveness above all things.

When God baptized you into Christ – He didn’t inject you with His grace so that now you can use that grace to make yourself purer and purer until you are worthy of His salvation. NO, His Grace is His unmerited favor towards you. He loves you, forgives you, saves you – not because of what you do – but because of who He is, and because of what Jesus Christ has done for you ... and for your salvation.

Today we “fear God and give Him glory” by receiving what He promises and offers – by receiving His body and blood – trusting His Word, that it is FOR YOU for the forgiveness of all your sins.

“All this He does ONLY out of Fatherly, divine, goodness and mercy – WITHOUT any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.”

This is most certainly true – for you – and for all the world – in Christ Jesus. This is His “eternal Gospel.” Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.