

In Christ Alone
Introducing the Reformation
Galatians 3:1-14

3 primary emphases of the Protestant Reformation

I. If You Are In Christ Alone, You Have Direct Access to the Throne of God

Galatians 1:6 - *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel...*

Galatians 3:1 - *You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?*

A. Instead of...

1. Human religious leaders to whom you confess your sin.

“He who does not accept the doctrine of the Church of Rome and the pontiff of Rome as an infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scriptures, too, draw their strength and authority, is a heretic.” *Martin Luther: Lessons from His Life and Labor*

2. Human religious leaders who live by a different set of rules.

“By any estimation, at the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, the Catholic Church was in desperate need of reformation. Many of the church leaders were living in shameless decadence that bred cynicism among the common worshippers.” Lutzer, pp. 1-2

3. Human religious leaders who determine the conditions and nature of your salvation.

“...a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven...An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1995 edition

B. The importance of the amazing doctrine of the priesthood of the believer

1 Peter 2:9-10 - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1 Timothy 2:5 - *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...*

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Hebrews 4:16 - *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

C. So that...

1. Your path to salvation is intended to remove your burden, not add to it.

1 Peter 1:18-19 - ...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Matthew 11:28-30 - Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

2. You can be secure in your salvation.

Galatians 3:24-26 - Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

3. You can pray directly to God for forgiveness, and direction, and help.

Matthew 6:9 - Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

II. If You Are In Christ Alone, You Can Understand and Apply God's Word

A. Two early reformers

John Wycliffe – 1330-1384

John Hus – 1369-1415

B. Martin Luther

“Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the Pope or in Councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other. May God help me!” Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, p. 328

C. Because of the unique position of God's Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

“What is asserted without the Scriptures or proven revelation may be held as an opinion but need not be believed.” Martin Luther – *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, cited in George, *The Theology of the Reformation*, pp. 81-82

D. Because of the unique provision of the Holy Spirit to each believer

1 John 2:26-27 - These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

E. Should be balanced by other passages

F. To be celebrated and exercised today

III. If You Are In Christ Alone, You Have the Marvelous Gift of the Righteousness of God

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

Romans 1:16-17 - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."*

Galatians 3:11 - *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."*

"Here I was in my tower, reading and praying. I labored diligently and anxiously to understand these words of Paul, 'the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel.' I sought long and knocked anxiously, for the expression, 'the righteousness of God,' blocked my way. As often as I read this expression, I wished that God had not made the gospel known at all. But then one day when I was meditating in the tower, I saw the difference between law and gospel for the first time in my life. The light broke through, as I formerly hated the expression, 'the righteousness of God,' I now regarded it as the most comforting word in all the Bible. In very truth, this language of St. Paul was to me the true gate to Paradise. Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith."