

RENOVATING OUR THEOLOGY

maugansville
CHURCH

Small Group Guide: "Who Are We?" - The Five Solas

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help you grow in understanding of foundational Protestant beliefs.

Icebreaker

Share about a time when you changed your mind about something important. What caused you to change your perspective?

Key Takeaways

The Five Solas of Protestant Faith:

1. **Scripture Alone (Sola Scriptura)** - The Bible is the sole authoritative source of God's revelation
2. **Faith Alone (Sola Fide)** - We are justified by faith, not by works
3. **Grace Alone (Sola Gratia)** - Salvation is God's unmerited favor, not something we earn
4. **Christ Alone (Solus Christus)** - Jesus is the sufficient and only mediator between God and humanity
5. **Glory to God Alone (Soli Deo Gloria)** - All glory for salvation belongs to God

Central Verse

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

- 1. The Weather Vane Analogy:** Pastor Chad compared the modern church to a weather vane that "points wherever the wind's blowing." What are some examples of "winds" (cultural trends, celebrity opinions, viral teachings) that try to blow the church off course today?
- 2. Martin Luther's Struggle:** Luther struggled with understanding righteousness until he discovered it was "counted to him" rather than "infused in him." What's the difference between these two concepts? Why does it matter?
- 3. Dead in Sin:** The sermon emphasized that we were "dead" in our sins, not just "sick." How does this understanding change the way we view salvation?

Going Deeper

- 4. Scripture Alone:** In Mark 7:8, Jesus said the Pharisees "leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." What are some "traditions of men" (even good ones) that we might elevate to the level of Scripture? How can we guard against this?
- 5. Faith Alone:** How would you explain to someone the difference between "faith alone" and "faith plus works"? Why is this distinction important?
- 6. Grace Alone:** If salvation is entirely by grace, what role (if any) do our good works play in the Christian life? (Hint: Look at Ephesians 2:10)
- 7. Christ Alone:** The sermon stated that Christ's sacrifice was "once for all." What does this mean for how we approach God today? How is this different from needing a human priest or mediator?

Personal Application

8. **Authority in Your Life:** What sources compete with Scripture for authority in your life? (Social media influencers, political ideologies, family traditions, personal feelings, etc.)
 9. **Boasting:** Paul says we shouldn't boast except in Christ. What are you tempted to boast about regarding your faith? How can you redirect that glory to God?
 10. **Setting Boundaries:** Pastor Chad called these five solas "foul lines" that help us stay in bounds. How can these principles help you evaluate new teachings or ideas you encounter?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Scripture Check

- When you hear a teaching (sermon, podcast, social media post), pause and ask: "Does this align with Scripture alone?" Look up the biblical references and verify them in context.

Option 2: Grace Reflection

- Journal about your salvation story. Identify any places where you've tried to add to God's grace or take credit for your salvation. Thank God specifically for His unmerited favor.

Option 3: Share Your Faith

- Practice explaining the gospel to someone using the "grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone" framework. This could be with a believer or non-believer.

Option 4: Examine Your Sources

- Make a list of your top 5 spiritual influences (podcasts, authors, teachers). Research what they believe about these five solas. Do they align with Scripture?
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Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Prayer Requests & Closing

Pray for:

- **Discernment to recognize false teaching**
- **Hearts that treasure Scripture above tradition**
- **Humility to give God all the glory for salvation**
- **Boldness to share the true gospel with others**
- **Protection from being "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14)**

Group Prayer Focus: Ask each person to share one area where they need God's grace this week, then pray for one another, remembering that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Looking Ahead

Next week's topic: [To be announced - continuing the summer series on foundational beliefs]

Additional Resources

- **Read Romans 1-4 this week, paying special attention to how Paul describes righteousness and faith**
- **Consider reading a brief history of the Protestant Reformation to better understand the context of these beliefs**
- **Reflect on the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed and how they align with Scripture**