

## Sola Fide: By Faith Alone

**Introduction:** Everyone believes in something, but the object is of eternal importance

*Two views on justification*

<b>Roman Catholic</b>	<b>Reformational</b>
Justification: a <b>process</b> initiated by God the Father...	Justification: a <b>declaration</b> of God the Father...
...flowing from <b>both</b> Divine grace and human merit...	...flowing from Divine <b>grace alone</b> ...
...on the grounds of the <b>infused</b> righteousness of Christ through the Holy Spirit <b>by the Church</b> ...	...on the grounds of the <b>imputed</b> righteousness of Christ through the Holy Spirit <b>by the word</b> ...
... accomplished through Divine and human <b>works</b> .	... appropriated through <b>faith alone</b> .

### **I. Not by works...**

#### ***i) Not by works of the Law***

##### Romans 3:19-20

*Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

##### Romans 3:28

*For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

##### Galatians 3:10-12

*For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."*

**Q: What of other works? Roman Catholic teaching on faith and works, then and now**

*"Fides caritate formata"* - Faith formed by charity

“If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.”

- *Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon IX*

“Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself...Living faith "works through charity.”

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, III.1.1.vii (1814)*

“The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity...The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of the children of God.”

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, III.1.1.vii (1827,28)*

But "faith apart from works is dead": when it is deprived of hope and love (charity), faith does not fully unite the believer to Christ and does not make him a living member of his Body.

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, III.1.1.vii (1815)*

## ***ii) Not by a principle of works at all***

### *Romans 4:1-5*

*What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness." Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.*

### *Titus 3:4-5*

*But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy.*

### *Ephesians 2:8*

*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.*

***Application: No grounds for boasting in ourselves***

## **II. But through faith...**

### *21. What is true faith?*

True faith is not only certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Spirit works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits.

- *Heidelberg Catechism 21*

### ***i) A certain knowledge...***

#### 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 for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

#### Romans 10:17

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

*(cf 2 Timothy 3:14-16, John 5:39, Luke 24:44)*

"It is through the Church that we receive faith and new life in Christ by Baptism. In the *Rituale Romanum*, the minister of Baptism asks the catechumen: "What do you ask of God's Church?" and the answer is: "Faith."

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church, I.1.3.ii.1 (168)*

### ***ii) A hearty trust...***

#### *Portraits of faith in the gospels:*

Mt 8:5-13, 9:20-22, 15:21-28; Mk 5:35-43, 10:46-52; Lk 7:36-50, 17:11-19

#### *Belief in John's gospel*

Receives Jesus, 1:12, 3:11

Obeys Jesus, John 3:36

Keeps Jesus' words, 8:51-52

Follows Jesus, 1:37-43

Abides in Jesus, 15:4-5

Hears Jesus, 10:3, 16

Comes to Jesus, 3:20-21

Goes to Jesus, 6:68

Enters in through Jesus, 10:9

Beholds Jesus, 6:40

Drinks of what Jesus gives, 4:14, 7:37

Feeds on Jesus, 6:50-57

### **III. In Jesus Christ.**

#### ***i) Jesus and his righteousness***

##### 1 Peter 3:18

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God*

##### Romans 3:21-25

*But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For 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, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.*

“I’m so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it.”

- J. Gresham Machen, letter to John Murray

#### ***ii) Not ourselves, nor our faith***

“We understand that saving faith is the outgoing act of the heart whereby one, in surrendering to Christ and receiving him, entrust body and soul to him in order that he would save him.”

- *Wilhelmus à Brakel, The Christian’s Reasonable Service*

##### Hebrews 12:1-2

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

### **IV. Living by faith**

#### ***- Ongoing faith and assurance***

##### Romans 5:6-9

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person— though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*

***- Faith and works:*** cf Gal 5-6, Jas 2:14-26, Rom 6:1-4