

2. Solus Christus
Acts 4:1-12, especially v 12

1. Announcements

- a. SS
- b. Personnel changes

2. Sermon introduction

- a. There are many things we do to be popular
 - i. In grade school, being a popular boy is not complicated. Whoever can kick the ball the farthest or burp the loudest is usually the most popular. I don't know how it works for girls.
 - ii. In junior high and high school, being popular is a little more nuanced. At Lewis and Clark high school, where I attended, the cool kids listened to Pearl Jam and Nirvana, wore grunge clothing, smoked pot, drank beer, drove SUVs, wore North Face Jackets, and put all their school supplies in huge brand name mountaineering backpacks.
 - iii. When you're married with kids the criteria for being popular changes but there is still the drive to be cool. And the cool people know intuitively what is required to be cool or popular!!!
 - iv. Admit it, we all spend some energy and effort trying to be cool.
- b. But no matter what season of life you're in it is easy to become unpopular or uncool by making one simple statement. What is that statement?
 - i. Jesus Christ is the only way to God (for everyone).
 - ii. If this is so unpopular than why say it? Because this is what the Bible clearly teaches. Let me remind you of last week's sermon text, 2 Tim. 3:16, "All scripture is God breathed." When the bible speaks, god speaks and the bible says that Jesus is the only way to God, therefore God says that Jesus is the only way to God.
 - iii. This is not only unpopular now, it was unpopular 500 years ago.
- c. This brings us to our current series titled *Reformation 500: Five doctrines that changed the world*. This series celebrates the 500th anniversary of the

Protestant reformation. 500 years ago this fall, the reformers rediscovered five key doctrines that changed the world. These doctrines are worthy of celebrating. They are called the five solas (explain)

- d. This morning we will look at the second sola (solus christus). Jesus Christ alone saves. This means two things, which will be the two points of this morning's sermon.
 - i. Jesus alone saves
 - i. Faith in Jesus alone saves

1. Jesus alone saves

- a. Does the bible *actually* teach that Jesus alone saves? Yes!
- b. **Acts 4:7–12 (ESV) — 7** And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" **8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, **9** if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, **10** let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. **11** This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. **12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
 - i. "And there is salvation in no one else..."
 - ii. Jesus alone saves. Salvation is found in no one else and nothing else.
- iii. Is this the only text that teaches that salvation is found in Jesus alone? No...
- iv. **1 Timothy 2:5–6 (ESV) — 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.
 - 1. Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit does not say that Jesus is the only way to God for Christians, but for other religions there is a different way to god. There is no other mediator between God and man no matter where you were born or who you worship.

- v. **Romans 3:23–24 (ESV) – 23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
 - 1. The universal problem is sin “all sinned”. The universal solution is Jesus. Redemption is found only in him.
- vi. **Luke 24:46–47 (ESV) – 46** and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
 - 1. Repentance and faith must be proclaimed in Jesus name to the nations because he is the only hope for the nations.
 - 2. Each nation or religion does not have its own savior. Jesus is the only savior for all the nations.
- vii. **More texts**
 - 1. John 14:6
 - 2. 1 Cor. 15:21-23
 - 3. Rev. 5

c. Jesus alone saves.

- i. Salvation is found in on one else.
 - ii. Jesus alone saves by dying on the cross in the place of sinners satisfying both the justice and the love of God.
 - iii. He is the only mediator between God and humanity.
 - iv. Scripture is crystal clear on this issue.
- d. How was Solus Christus applied during the 16th century?
- i. Solus Christus made the reformers very unpopular. Why? Many reasons, I will mention a few.
 - ii. **Marry-** The RCC taught its followers to pray to Marry. After all, they reasoned, Jesus is a terrible judge, he will not hear your prayers, but Marry will. If you want to get Christ’s attention talk to his mother. The RCC still refers to marry as the comediatrix.
 - 1. The reformers taught that Jesus alone is the mediator between God and man. (Matt. 11:28-30). He encourages us to go directly to him.
 - iii. **Indulgences-** RCC taught that after death Christians went to a place called purgatory where their sins were purged away before they could enter heaven. To shorten this time one could buy indulgences, essentially purchasing the merit earned by others.

1. The reformers reacted strongly against this. we don't buy forgiveness through indulgences we get forgiveness freely through Jesus Christ alone.
- iv. **The sacraments-** Righteousness is infused into us through our participation in the sacraments. If we participate enough we will be righteous enough to be justified on the day of final judgment.
 1. Righteousness is not infused into us through participation in the sacraments. Righteousness is imputed to us through Jesus Christ alone.
- e. Contemporary context
 - i. Before we Protestants get too self-righteous we need to look in the mirror.
 - ii. Protestants are also guilty of believing that we are saved by Jesus Christ plus something. Maybe we don't formally believe this but we functionally believe this. PBA...
 - iii. If we believe that Jesus alone saves why do we feel less saved when we fail to perform for Jesus?
 - iv. If we believe that Jesus alone saves why do we feel more saved when we perform for Jesus?
 - f. Jesus Christ alone saves...
 - g. Objections
 - i. Pluralism-
 1. Pluralism teaches that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is necessary for Christians to get to heaven but other religions have their own way of getting to heaven.
 2. In other words, Jesus is a way to God, but he is not the only way to God.
 3. "That is great for you... but it is not for me..."
 4. "All religious systems teach morality... isn't that good enough???"
 5. All that matters, is being sincere.
 6. You Christians are so arrogant to say that Jesus is the only way.
 - ii. Philosophical Response-
 1. Both the pluralist and the exclusivist think the other view is wrong.
 2. Both views are intolerant of the other.
 3. Both views think they have a better view of ultimate reality

4. So, if one view is arrogant than both views are arrogant.
5. The issue is not an issue of arrogance it is an issue of truth. If I told you that 2 plus 2 equals 4 would you say that I'm arrogant? No... why? Because it is true that 2 plus 2 equals 4. It is a fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is true that he is God. Since he is God what he says must be true and he says he is the only way to god.
6. This means that all other ways lead to judgment.

iii. Theological response-

1. If we teach that salvation is found in the Buddha, or Allah, Confucius we are giving God's saving glory to idols. This makes God angry. If you don't believe me read the OT.
2. The only thing that might make God angrier is saying the names of Buddha, Allah, and Confucius with the same breath that we use to say the name Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the son of god, the second person of the trinity, the creator of all things, the king of kings and lord of lords. He is the coming judge, and he will not share his saving glory with man-made idols and demonic counterfeits.

iv. Summary- Only Jesus saves.

- v. Ok, I agree that Jesus alone saves but does someone really need to have conscious faith in Jesus Christ to be saved. This brings us to the second point.

h. Jesus alone saves...

2. Faith in Jesus alone saves

a. Let me define the key terms in this debate.

- i. **Pluralism**- All religions lead to God. Just dealt with this one...
- ii. **Inclusivism** - "...is the view that, although Jesus is the only Savior of the world, one does not need to believe the gospel to be saved." (Peterson, 12)
- iii. **Exclusivism** - "...is the view that Jesus Christ is the only savior of the world and that one must believe God's special revelation that culminates in Jesus Christ in order to be saved." (Peterson, 12)

- b. Does the Bible teach exclusivism? Yes...
- c. **Acts 4:12 (ESV) – 12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- i. Let’s look at each phrases of this text
 1. No other name under heaven... (not just for Israelites but for every culture that is under heaven)
 2. Given among men (not just Jews but every man and women)
 3. Which we must be saved (we must call on Jesus name to be saved)
- d. **Romans 10:10–15 (ESV) – 10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. **11** For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes *in him* will not be put to shame.” **12** For there is no distinction between *Jew and Greek*; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who *call on him*. **13** For “everyone who *calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*.” **14** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”
- i. We must believe in Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Preachers must go out and preach Jesus because faith in Jesus is required to be saved.
 - iii. If one could be saved apart from knowledge of Jesus what is the point of preachers going out to tell people specifically about Jesus.
 - iv. Preachers must go out and tell sinners about Jesus otherwise they will not be saved.
- e. **John 14:6 (ESV) – 6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- i. In John Gospel the phrase “Through me” clearly means through faith in me (John 6:35, 7:38, 11:25, 12:46, 17:20)
 - ii. Jesus, and Jesus alone is the savior of the world... we must believe in his name.
 - iii. If Jesus is lying or wrong about this than he is not god. If he is not God we can’t be saved.
 - iv. It makes no sense to say, “I’m a Christian, a follower of Jesus, but he blew it on this point!!!” Really??? This is the pinnacle of arrogance on our part. We know more than Jesus!!! Really? Be careful what you embrace from the world on this point.

v. **See also... Luke 24:44-48**

- f. Summary- only conscious faith in Jesus Christ Saves!!!
- g. Objections-
- h. What about the sincere Muslim, Buddhist, or Jew?
 - i. Driving down the road listening to the Last Battle by CS Lewis and hearing his inclusivism loud and clear...
 - ii. The book is about the climactic battle between good and evil before Christ returns. In the book, there is a character named Emeth and he is a Calormene. This means that he is not a Narnian and not a worshipper of Aslan the Christ figure. Instead he worships the God Tash. When Emeth meets Aslan at final judgment he says this,
 - iii. "...Then I fell at his feet and thought, Surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion (who is worthy of all honor) will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him...But the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, Son thou art welcome. But I said, alas, Lord, I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me." (last battle, Lewis)
 - iv. Lewis is saying that even though Tash had no knowledge of Aslan when he worshipped Tash he was really worshipping Aslan. When he worshipped Allah he really worshipped Jesus!!!
 - v. Mere Christianity... book 4 chapter 10 states explicitly that sincere Buddhist and Muslims will be in heaven even though they knew nothing of Jesus Christ.
 - vi. Response
 - 1. This is a direct contradiction of the words of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. How dare we share Christ's saving glory with Muhammad or Allah or anyone else for that matter.
 - 3. Muhammad did not rise from the dead!
 - 4. Allah did not send his one and only son to suffer for you!
 - 5. Allah is a demonic figment of Muhammad's imagination.
 - 6. We are only saved through the name of Jesus. That is by putting our faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- i. What about God's justice?

- i. This seems to be the major objection!!!
 - ii. It is not fair that some people never have the chance to hear about Jesus?
 - iii. In response, it is not fair that anyone gets to hear about Jesus.
 - iv. We have all rebelled against god, no one deserves to know about Jesus.
 - v. God is constantly calling us to him but repeatedly we rebel against his laws and worship false Gods.
- j. What about the innocent native in Africa??? Is he saved?
- i. Yes, the innocent native is saved.
 - ii. But, there are no innocent natives.
 - iii. No one is innocent.

k. What about General revelation?

- i. **Romans 1:19–21 (ESV) — 19** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **20** For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. **21** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
- ii. Some argue from this texts that although very rare, one can be saved based on General revelation.
- iii. What does this text actually teach?
 1. V. 20 God reveals his eternal power and divine nature through creation. that is all...
 2. He does not reveal the reality of sin, the necessity of the savior, and the importance of faith and repentance.
 3. This teach also teaches that everyone is without excuse.
 4. The bible gives no apologetic for God because we already have one in nature.
 5. Romans 10 contradicts inclusivists.

l. What about OT saints who did not know about Jesus?

- i. OT saints know allot more about Christ than we give them credit for.
- ii. Heb 11:13- "These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar..."
- iii. Heb 11:26- "Moses considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward."
- iv. John 8:56- Christ said "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day, he saw it and was glad."

v. OT saints looked forward not with exact knowledge of the Christ, but with Great certainty that God would send his promised messiah.

m. **Piper's** answer to this question.

i. "Before Jesus, faith was focused on the mercy and promise of God to forgive sins and to care for his people. As revelation progressed, faith could move more easily from the animal sacrifices onto the promised sin-bearer of Isaiah 53. But when Christ came, all faith narrowed in its focus to him alone as the one who purchased and guaranteed all the hopes of the people of God. From the time of Christ onward, God wills to honor Christ by making him the sole focus of saving faith. Therefore, people must call upon him and believe in him and hear him and be sent messengers with 'the word of Christ'". (Piper, 105)

- n. I have tried to prove two points
- i. Jesus alone saves
 - ii. Faith in Jesus alone saves

3. Application

a. We should marvel at the fact that there is a way to be saved...

- i. Instead of asking why is there only one way?

ii. We should marvel that there is a way.

1. Imagine being locked up in a prison cell for 50 years. Finally, the prison warden comes and tells you that there is a way to be free. All you need to do is walk out of your jail cell. But this is the only way to be free...
2. If you try to tunnel through the walls we will give you 50 more years.
3. If you try to climb out the window we will give you 50 more years.
4. If you try to stab a prison guard and steal his keys you will be given 50 more years.
5. But there is a way to be free... one way.... You simply walk out the door.
6. Can you imagine the prisoner complaining.... "I can't believe that you have given me only one choice..."

iii. God says, I sent Jesus to forgive your sins, send you to heaven, change your life now, and do a thousand other things. And we complain.... why didn't you give us more options, more saviors??? You have not done enough!!! Seriously??? God has given us his son... his son is way more valuable than Muhammad, Confucius, or Moses.

- b. Since Christ alone saves you must put all your hope in him to save you.
 - i. Works will not save you
 - ii. Good intentions will not save you
 - iii. Allah will not save you
 - iv. The teachings of the Buddha will not save you.
- c. Since Christ alone saves we must take his name to the nations starting with the people closest to you.
 - i. Our lost and dying friends must hear about Jesus
 - ii. We can't hold out a vague sense of hope for those who have not heard.
 - iii. There is a real urgency to the task!
 - iv. Support our missionaries
- d. Since Christ alone saves we must not shy away from proclaiming his exclusivity.
 - i. This will test your courage
 - ii. This will test your commitment to the authority of scripture.
 - iii. This will test your allegiance to Jesus Christ himself.
 - iv. Daniel 3:1, 8-30 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednigo)

4. Conclusion

- a. Jesus Christ alone saves (Solus Christus)
- b. I would like to conclude by reading the words of John Calvin, the great 16th century reformer. He comments on our text...
- c. "We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ (Acts 4:12). We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is 'of him' (1 Cor 1.13). If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity, in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth... If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission of the curse, in his cross (Gal 3:13); if

satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if purification, in his blood; ... if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb; if newness of life, in his resurrection;.. if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in his entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in his Kingdom;... In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain and from no other" (Institutes 2.16.19).