

Sunday morning October 22nd 2017 at CBC

Sermon outline: 'Sola Fide'

Romans 3.21-4.8

On April 11th 1970, 1.13 pm Houston time ...

Do we, as human beings, have a problem?

Is there a problem with humanity, with human nature?

[1] WE HAVE A PROBLEM

The Christian message identifies the fundamental nature of the human problem as being in essence a rebellion against God, our creator. There is cliché to the effect that the heart of the human problem is the human heart. Once we realise that we are accountable to God our Creator, and that he has a right to be angry with us, and has indeed set a day when he will judge the world by his Son whom he has appointed, then we realise that we have a problem.

See Romans 1:18-20 and Romans 3:22-23

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God NIV

[2] GOD HAS A SOLUTION

The good news is that there is a solution.

Romans 3:22-25

This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of

atonement, through the shedding of his blood, to be received by faith. NIV

[a] This is a global solution for a global problem

Human sinfulness is essentially the same the whole world over (all have sinned) and the solution is the same for the whole world (all are justified).

[b] This is God's solution for a human problem

Now God has designed us to be, in very large measure, solvers of problems. But there is no way that we can solve the problem caused by our sins rightfully attracting the anger of God.

[c] Christ's sacrifice for human sinfulness

What is the solution that God has provided?

It is no less than his very own son who becomes a sacrifice of atonement. What is being said in Romans 3 is that Jesus has, by his death, paid the redemption price that releases sinners from the slavery of sin and thus the wrath of God and those who are released are now slaves (servants) of Jesus Christ. That is not an intolerable burden but a great privilege.

[d] Faith alone is the only response

Martin Luther could read the Bible in and he came to realise the truth of the verses we are looking at. And he was of course by no means the first or the last!

Being justified – that is, being declared forgiven, being declared not guilty before God – was a gift of God *to be received in simple faith [25]*.

[22] *This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe*

[25] *..the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus*

[27] *.. because of the law (principle) that requires faith*

[28] *we maintain that a person is justified by faith*

[30] *God ... will justify the circumcised (Jewish people) by faith and the uncircumcised (non-Jewish people) by that same faith*

Do we get the point?!

Someone may say, 'but surely it is scandalous that forgiveness should be so freely available without human effort!'

Exactly so – God’s love in Jesus Christ is wonderfully scandalous!

It has often offended highly religious people.

But it has far more often delighted those who recognise the seriousness of their own sin and the hopelessness of their own position before God.

Martin Luther said something about this particular principle that marked it out from the other 4 'solas' (Scripture alone, by grace alone, Christ alone, God’s glory alone): *quia isto articulo stante stat Ecclesia, ruente ruit Ecclesia*. "Because if this article [of justification] stands, the church stands; if this article collapses, the church collapses."

CONCLUSION – Have we recognized the problem and accepted the solution?

We need to ensure that we have seen this truth with clarity.

We place an emphasis on baptism at CBC and rightly so. And we see to encourage 'gospel activity' in order to share the

Christian message with others. But we must never add these things to the principle of 'by faith alone'.

So let's remind ourselves of what happened when the Lord Jesus was crucified. Two criminals were executed with him, one to his right, the other to his left. At some point one of the men challenged his fellow criminal to consider the fact that while both of them were guilty, Jesus was not. Then he called to Jesus (Luke 23.42): *"Remember me when you come into your kingdom"*. And how did Jesus reply?

He said simply (Luke 23.43), *'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'*

Faith, only faith, faith alone.

Can you say this morning that you have been made right in the sight of God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ whom you accept in simple faith as your Saviour?

Have you received the benefits of the atonement for sins provided by Jesus Christ simply through faith – which is actually the only way they can be received?

Can you place yourself within this sentence?

"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood – to be received by faith" (Romans 3.25)

Have you received Christ, and the benefits he has obtained, by faith and only by faith?