

INTRODUCTION.

SOLA FIDE ~ FAITH ALONE.

▶▶ Sola fide is the summary of the biblical teaching that a person is declared righteous or justified by God on the basis of our faith alone and not by works or anything else.

▷▷ Coupled with sola gratia, ~ grace alone, ~ we hold that justification before God is an act of God's grace which can only be received through faith in Jesus Christ.

↪↪ By grace alone, ~ through faith alone, ~ in Christ Jesus alone.

▶▶ As noted ~ sola fide is basically what Paul discusses in this paragraph that we are currently looking at, ~ Phil. 3:1-11.

▶▶ And we have been developing this theme of "faith alone" as we move through the paragraph.

▶▶ In a nutshell: ~~ Presents a warning against false views of salvation, ~ or false gospels, ~ and he also presents the correct view of salvation, ~ or the true gospel.

TODAY WE ARE GOING TO EXAMINE VERSES 4-7.

IN VERSE 4, ~ PAUL BEGINS BY BUILDING ON WHAT HE SAID AT THE END OF verse 3, ~ that the genuine people of God "put no confidence in the flesh."

I.E., ~ AS SUGGESTED LAST TIME, ~ WE PUT NO CONFIDENCE IN THE NOTION THAT we could be in any way, ~ or are in any way, ~ the source of our salvation. ☞☞ Verse 4

IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE PAUL IS TURNING AROUND HERE AND CONTRADICTING himself. ~~ On the one hand, ~ says ~~ But on the other hand, ~ says he does.

▶▶ No, ~ Paul's not turning around here and contradicting himself.

▷▷ He's not saying that genuine believers put no confidence in the idea that we could be in any way, ~ or are in any way, ~ the source of our salvation.

↪↪ And then turning around and saying but he does.

▷▷ Based on what he says in the following verses, ~ I think it's clear that he's not contradicting himself. ↵↵ 1/7

▶▶ The overarching thought here, ~ I would suggest, ~ seems to be this.

▷▷ "But if it were right to have such confidence in human efforts, ~ credentials, ~ or human anything for achieving salvation, ~ I could certainly gain it. ~ If anyone else thinks that he has reason to be confident in his own efforts to achieve salvation, I have far more reason.

↳↳ IOW, ~ if we could be the source of our salvation, ~ Paul would have achieved it in a breeze. ~ That's what I believe he's saying.

▶▶ He had covered just about all, ~ if not all, ~ of the human bases:

▷▷ Performing religious rituals, ~ having the right heritage and status, ~ zealously practicing his religion, ~ obeying the OT law, ~ and racking up works of righteousness.

▶▶ And yet, ~ Paul will go on to show us ~ that all that these things qualify for ~ is the garbage dump. ~ They mean nothing when it comes to being made right with God.

▷▷ False teachers saying: ~ "Mean something. ~ Get into heaven."

▷▷ Paul, ~ knowing firsthand: ~ "No, ~ they don't. ~ And, ~ no, ~ they won't.

▶▶ Humanly speaking, ~ all of these things are very impressive and make for a great résumé.

▷▷ Performing religious rituals, ~ having the right heritage and status, ~ enthusiastically practicing one's religion, ~ obeying religious rules, ~ and good works.

▷▷ Impressive résumé. ~ And Paul had them all. ~ However, ~ when it comes to eternal life, ~ these things don't impress God one iota.

↳↳ And he's not in the business of looking at a person's résumé to determine if that person qualifies to be given eternal life.

▷▷ Nothing can qualify us to be the source of our salvation. ~ God, ~ and God alone, ~ is the source of our salvation. ☞☞ Col. 1:12-14 ❀

❀↳↳ Absolutely nothing can qualify us to be the source of our salvation.

→→ Only God can qualify a person to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people.

↳↳ Only God can rescue a person from the dominion of darkness and transfer them to the kingdom of the Son he loves. ❀❀ 2/7

IN VERSES 5-6, ~ PAUL GOES THROUGH HIS IMPRESSIVE RÉSUMÉ, ~ IN WHICH HE put absolutely no confidence. ~~ Although he once did, ~ before he met Jesus on Damascus Rd.

PAUL WAS CIRCUMCISED WHEN HE WAS EIGHT-DAYS OLD.

▶▶ The eighth day was the day stipulated by the Old Testament law for a young Jewish boy to be circumcised.

▷▷ Circumcision was the external sign of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 17). ~~ It signified membership in the community of Israel, ~ and set them apart as God's people.

▶▶ So like any eight-day-old Jewish boy, ~ Paul was circumcised.

▶▶ And as a pious Jew, ~ no doubt he would have performed many religious rituals growing up and into adulthood.

▶▶ But Paul knew that being circumcised as a baby and performing religious rituals could not make anyone right before God.

▶▶ Some people think that just because they have been baptized as an infant or they strictly observe religious rituals, ~ God will let them into heaven. ~~ They are tragically mistaken.

▶▶ Things like following the rules of the Bible, ~ confirmation, ~ baptism, ~ joining in the Lord's supper in themselves do not impress God.

▷▷ It is a personal relationship with God that means something. ~~ And that comes only through faith alone in Christ Jesus alone.

BACK TO PAUL'S RÉSUMÉ. ~~ PAUL WAS A PURE-BLOODED CITIZEN OF ISRAEL.

▶▶ Says, ~ "of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews."

▶▶ He was a member of God's elect race, ~ his chosen people. ~~ His parents were both true Jews, ~ and he could trace his heritage back to Abraham.

▷▷ Paul had good religious and national roots.

▶▶ Paul was more specifically a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ~~ This was a heritage greatly esteemed among the Jews.

▷▷ Though the tribe of Benjamin was one of the smaller tribes, ~ apparently it had a special place of honor throughout its history. ↴ 3/7

▶▶ Paul was a real Hebrew if there ever was one. ~~ But Paul knew that religious roots, ~ national roots, ~ or family connections could not give him access to heaven.

▶▶ Simply growing up in a Christian home with Christian parents will not get a person into heaven. ~~ God has no grandchildren.

▷▷ IOW, ~ family connections cannot give a person access to heaven.

▶▶ Some people feel they are right with God just because they are Americans. ~~ Others sense an acceptance with God because they came from a good religious background.

▷▷ But national or religious roots do not and cannot gain God's approval.

PAUL'S RÉSUMÉ CONTINUES. ~ HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE PHARISEES.

▶▶ This was the most devout, ~ orthodox, ~ and strict Jewish sect, ~ who demanded the strictest obedience to the Jewish law.

▷▷ They believed that salvation came from perfect obedience to the law.

▶▶ But after Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road, ~ he knew that status in and faithfulness to one's religion cannot make them righteous before God.

▷▷ As Paul wrote in [Rom. 3:10](#), ~ "as it is written: 'None is righteous, no, not one.'"

▶▶ High status in and faithfulness to one's religion, ~ such as church attendance, ~ is a false basis of confidence because it rests upon the accomplishment of man.

▷▷ A Pharisee went to the synagogue three times a day. ~~ He prayed seven times a day.

▷▷ Pharisee & tax collector. ~~ We noted that the Pharisee bragged about his religious achievements and remained condemned.

▷▷ Christianity rests upon the accomplishments of Christ, ~ alone. ~~ On the cross.

↪↪ No one is ever made right with God through religious status and faithfulness.

(VERSES 5-6) RÉSUMÉ. ~~ "AS TO ZEAL," PAUL "WAS A PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH."

▶▶ In his "zeal" for his religious convictions, ~ he persecuted the church.

▶▶ His zeal and sincerity could never have been questioned. ~~ Unfortunately, ~ a person can be sincerely wrong. ~~ This is what Paul said about the Jews. **↪↪ 4/7**

▷▷Rom. 10:2-3, ~ "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

▷▷I.e., ~ Paul knew what enthusiasm they had for God, ~ but it was misdirected zeal.

↪↪For they didn't understand God's way of making people right with himself.

→→Refusing to accept God's way, ~ they clung to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.

↪↪They were sincere, ~ but sincerely wrong.

▶▶Paul knew that sincerity in one's religious convictions will not open the gates of heaven for them.

▷▷A person can be sincere, ~ and sincerely wrong at the same time.

(VERSES 5-6) AND HERE'S PAUL'S FINAL POINT ON HIS RÉSUMÉ.

▶▶As for righteousness, ~ he obeyed the Mosaic, ~ or OT, ~ law without fault. ~~ Paul doesn't say that he was perfect.

▷▷He merely asserts his faithfulness to keeping religious rules and performing good works.

▶▶If it was possible for anyone to be righteous before God through his keeping of religious rules and good works, ~ it would have been Paul.

▶▶But Paul knew that salvation cannot be earned through law-keeping and good works.

▷▷Gal. 2:16, ~ "yet we know that a person is not justified ~ [i.e., ~ not made right with God] ~ by works of the law ~ but through faith in Jesus Christ."

↪↪This is how a person is made right with God, ~ through faith in Jesus.

▷▷"so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified ~ [or, ~ made right with God] ~ by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, ~ ¶¶

↪↪because by works of the law no one will be justified."

↪↪No one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law. ¶¶ 5/7

▷▷ Titus 3:4-7.

↳↳⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness ~ [notice: ~ not because of the righteous things we had done], ~ ¶¶

↳↳ but according to ~ [or, ~ because of] ~ his own mercy, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit ~ [i.e., ~ he washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit], ~ ¶¶

↳↳⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

▶▶ To depend on following religious rules or good works or anything other than the precious blood of Christ for salvation ~ is fatal.

▷▷ The name of anyone who is trusting in following religious rules or good works or anything other than the precious blood of Christ for salvation ~ **will not be found in the Lamb's book of life.**

↳↳ Only the names of those who have faith alone in Christ Jesus alone will be found in the Lamb's book of life.

VS. 7 CONTAINS PAUL'S CONCLUSION ABOUT HIS IMPRESSIVE RÉSUMÉ. ~ 7 . . .

PAUL ONCE THOUGHT THESE THINGS WERE VALUABLE AND WOULD MAKE HIM RIGHT with God.

▶▶ Through his conversion on the Damascus Road, ~ Paul had learned to consider the things on his résumé as worthless and a liability.

▶▶ He had come to the settled conviction that they were worthless. ~

▷▷ They could do nothing for him when it came to being made right with God.

▶▶ He also came to the settled conviction that these things were in reality a liability.

▷▷ Because, ~ rather than bringing him close to God, ~ they had actually kept him separated from God, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ because they could not bridge the gap that exists between human beings and God.

CONCLUSION.

PAUL CAME TO UNDERSTAND, ~ AND HE WANTS US AND everyone to understand, ~ 77

▶▶ that a person is made right with God by God's grace through faith in Christ Jesus, ~ and not by anything else.

▷▷ We are saved by grace alone ~ through faith alone, ~ in Christ Jesus alone.

↪↪ And he wants us to truly grasp the truth that only Jesus is able to bridge the gap that exists between us and God.

→→ "There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity — the man Christ Jesus." (NLT)

↪↪ "There is salvation in no one else! ~ God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." (NLT)

LET'S PRAY 7/7