

Faith Alone

In the early 1500s, members of the church had much to do in order to attain a hope for salvation. With the seven sacraments of baptism, confirmation, mass, marriage, penance, Holy Orders and Last Rites, members of the Dark Ages had many possibilities to work their way out of purgatory and toward Heaven.

Along with these sacraments, church authority had added extra works for members to complete in order to help themselves, friends or family to move closer to Heaven and shorten the time in Purgatory. Pilgrimages to special locations, such as the Holy steps in Rome, reportedly the same ones Christ ascended when going to meet Pilate. There were also items from events in the Bible or Church history such as a twig from the burning bush, straw from Jesus crib or the bones and teeth of saints. It was believed that these location and items all helped to lessen the time required to purify ones soul in purgatory.

If members could not complete certain task, there was the option of paying for merit in the form of indulgences. Started during the Crusades, indulgences provided the purchaser forgiveness from the penance portion, the hail Maries and our fathers, shortening or eliminating the time that they would have to spend in Purgatory. The Church claimed that these indulgences were possible, not because of the merit of Christ and his work on the cross, but from the multitude of saints that had been so good in this life; they had merit left over that the church would hold in the Treasury of Merit to give to other believers that could earn or afford it.

The Reformers saw that justification was not by works, but by faith. The debt of sin that we owe could not and cannot be paid by us. Christ work on the cross is the only acceptable act that could redeem the lost. The perfect God of the Universe required a perfect sacrifice, which is

only accomplished in the work of Christ Jesus. Faith in the work of Christ is all that God requires because any of our works are seen as filthy rags.

With Sola Scriptura showing us the truth of Sola Gratia being the only way that we can desire God, we can understand that we are reconciled only by faith alone, Sola Fide.

Roman 3:21-30 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.
28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.
29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,
30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.