

Solo Christo
(2 Samuel 22:1-7 Romans 6:1-14)
March 7 2010

The top five is a good place to be.

As my senior year in High school approached I remember making a list of my top 5 colleges of interest; it was Hastings Nebraska, Nebraska Wesleyan, Buena Vista in Storm Lake, IA, St Olaf in Northfield, Minnesota and Bethany College in Lindsborg, KS.

When looking for a seminary. Stephanie and I visited and prayed about Columbia in Georgia, Union in VA, Pittsburgh PA, Austin TX and Princeton NJ.

Similarly when I was discerning my call out of seminary I thought seriously about where God could be leading me and interestingly, I interviewed with and considered 4 other churches before feeling God's direction in my 5th and final interview with the P.N.C. of Ellsworth Kansas.

Before last week Kansas and KSU men's basketball teams were in the top 5, Even though K-State gave them a good game it is also where the Nebraska Cornhusker women's basketball team will remain and...it is also where F.P.C. of Ellsworth finished in P.N.K. in terms of mission giving commitments!

Lent is an excellent time to reflect on the things of importance in your life. Thus, I encourage you to develop your own top five 5....of issues or ideas in the Christian faith.

What matters the most to you about your faith? What are your top five?

Are there things that you value which are non-Biblical?

-Evelyn Jenkinjer comment to me about wearing a robe...

Not all things that Christians value are scriptural. However, this doesn't make such things wrong but it does make their spiritual significance a bit more abstract.

Thus, for the purpose of your spiritual growth I encourage you to find 5 scripturally supported ideas. Pray about and reflect upon them for the remaining weeks of Lent.

Today we continue our top 5 of another kind; "The 5 solas" of the Reformation.

During the Reformation various leaders called the church back to a biblical and God-centered faith. Another key realization was naming Christ as the sole mediator between God and man.

The ideas surrounding this remain a highly discussed and debated concept.

Do we need any others...or is Christ enough?

Further, who determines our eternal abode?

Many religious subjects are discussed outside of church walls but certainly none more than considering who has the ultimate authority over our eternal destination.

If the church has authority then it follows that being in good standing with the church is very important.

If Christ alone is authoritative then we would do well to develop a deeper relationship with Christ.

If one thinks they “know Christ enough” and therefore can afford to skip a service or two or more than a few...I can’t help but wonder where such a person’s priorities lie?

Worshiping God is commanded in making time for the Sabbath and essential for developing a relationship with God and with others who make the same commitments.

Presbyterians do NOT believe going to church saves you but we do believe our faith is encouraged and deepened by regular worship and Christian fellowship.

The authority of a church can be a good thing if it is done in God-directed, scripture inspired ways but when it over steps its boundaries it becomes just as faulty as any other human-led institution.

For instance, for centuries the Roman Catholic Church has held that there is a place called purgatory where after death mediocre souls are detained for further growth.

It is said that they can be helped by the intercessions of the faithful as well as Saints which can be venerated and invoked; not to mention the relics to be used in prayer.

The reformers taught something else entirely; that salvation was by Christ's work alone not from special prayers, words of a priest, the saints or with icons; CHRIST ALONE!

As John Calvin said in the Institutes of the Christian Religion, "Christ stepped in, took the punishment upon himself and bore the judgment due to sinners. With his own blood he expiated the sins which made them enemies of God and thereby satisfied him...we look to Christ alone for divine favor and fatherly love!"

As our Affirmation of faith asks, "Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior who seek their salvation and happiness in saints, in themselves, or anywhere else? **They do not**; for though they boast of him in words yet in deeds they deny Jesus the *only* deliverer and Savior: for one of these two things must be true that either Jesus is not a complete Savior or that they who by a true faith receive this Savior must find all things in him necessary to their salvation." Heidelberg Catechism 4.030

Solo Christo means there is only one real-saving-Christ. He is the only Christ.

Having said that today's culture offers many "Christs" who are not really Christ at all.

Can you think of some? People, places or even things we call "our salvation"

I have heard people speak of helpful friends being a "saving grace" or "life-savers".

Maybe these aren't said intentional to suggest deity but just think before you call anyone other than Christ your savior.

There are other false Saviors out there...

Consider, Christ the psychotherapist. This "Christ" is preached as the one who can heal our inner psychological wounds. He can heal broken marriages, aid us in communication with our children, and deal with other dysfunctional situations.

While Christ *can* do this, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ should never be limited to the one who only heals our-own inner struggles.

Christ the perfect example. This Christ is preached as a moral example that we are to emulate-as if we can become perfect this side of heaven! The wrong idea behind this view is that our sin is little more than confusion within us that once we really decide to become serious about our faith we should then have the moral wherewithal to do whatever is needed to fix our sins.

Christ does redeem us from our sins BUT Christ can never take away our fallen nature this side of the grave.

Christ who gives health and wealth. Surprisingly common is the preaching of a "Christ" who always grants health or wealth to those whose faith in him reaches the level it should. Those who have watched the popular televangelists recognize this "Christ." Sadly, many African and Latin American Christians expect this kind of Christ to show up so as to solve their economic struggles and woes.

I have preached about this before and probably will again...it is crucial that we understand our faith as helping us in life, hope and peace-giving NOT as a way to hand us our materialistic dreams-as if that could solve all our problems!

Christ the brother/sister. I have seen this one all too often in these parts. This is a Christ who has become belittled to buddy Jesus, one that is equal to us. This Jesus is an undemanding good old boy, best friend type who will never expect anything out of us. His is a gospel of kindness and non-accountability. Go ahead say, do and become whom ever you choose to and this Christ will always love you no matter what.

It may be true that God-in Christ loves even the least among us but to assume our egregious and selfish sins are just fine by God is spiritually ignorant. God is compassionate but grace is not cheaply given.

And so many more...

In today's Old Testament passage David has no doubt as to where he will look for his stability and security. He doesn't mention his close friends, his position, a gift of riches or his ability to measure up to God as the reason for his faith.

Instead it is the greatness of God which makes God worthy to be praised.

It is God's divine attributes which make David tremble with fear and delight during his 40 year reign as King of the Israelites.

Paul says, "for the death that (Christ) died, he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God." (Romans 6:10)

Who do you live to?

What priorities do you make?

What does your life say about you?

Where do you place your highest and most honest hope?

God-in and through Christ-gives us new and living hope.

God and God alone gives us this hope; not the Pope, clergy, ancestry, local or national church or anything else other than God.

Not Solo-spirituality

Not Solo-religiosity

Not Solo-Hardheadedness

Not Solo-American nationality

Not Solo-Caucasian skinned

Not Solo-Middle Class

Not Solo...ANYTHING ELSE.

Solo Christo period...end of story...end of sermon...AMEN!

