

**Five Solas of the Reformation Conference
Grace Bible Church of Olive Branch, MS**

Soli Deo Gloria

To the Glory of God Alone

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

John 12:27-33

Outline by Jordan Thomas

INTRODUCTION

The Latin phrase, “Soli Deo Gloria,” means “Glory to God alone.”

As it relates to a biblical understanding of soteriology (i.e., the doctrine of salvation; Or, how God saves a soul), as well as a comprehensive view of the Christian life, this one phrase captures the heart of what the Spirit of God wrought during the 16th century through *The Protestant Reformation*. The great reform in those days was essentially a return to the biblical truth that the salvation of sinners is a work of God, and of God alone (Matt. 19:25-26). Therefore, to God alone belongs all the glory (Rom. 11:33-36). Or, to say it simply, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

The 16th century Reformers were used by God to show from Scripture that the glorification of God is the only proper aim of everything (1 Cor. 10:31). The hope of Christians is our eternal enjoyment of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2). One day soon, all of God’s children will forever behold the glory of God beaming from the face of His Son (John 17:24; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6).

But beneath all of this is a much deeper, more foundational, aspect of God’s glory. That is, *God’s own* commitment to His glory (Isa. 48:9-11). Our God-centeredness rests squarely on God’s God-centeredness. The work of God’s saving grace in the soul of man is ultimately “for His Name’s sake” (Ps. 23:3). Personal renewal in the hearts of God’s people happens by the Spirit, through the Word, *mainly* for the sake of God’s Name (Ps. 143:11). In no uncertain terms, God declared to Israel that their salvation was *not* primarily for them, but for Him (Ezek. 36:22). Indeed, in the most shocking display of God’s unwavering commitment to His own glory – which we repeatedly find Scripture teaching us – is that even the cross of Christ was not ultimately for us, but *especially* for the glory of God (Jn. 12:27-28; Phil. 2:9-11).

Thus, the Scripture-saturated Westminster divines of the 17th century have now drilled into the heads of subsequent generations that “the chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.”

Turn with me to John chapter 12 to see the Lord Jesus teach us that the heart of the Christian faith – the cross of Christ – is primarily about God’s own glory.

John 12:27-33. From this passage, we learn about...

I. John 12:27 — The Purpose of the Incarnation

The Lord Jesus teaches that *the reason* He came to earth as the God-Man was for “this hour” (v. 27). His cross-death (v. 30) was the ultimate reason He was born (cf. John 18:37). The eternal Son of God took on flesh and blood to become *killable* (cf. Hebrews 2:14-18). Especially in this way, Jesus “glorified the Father on earth” by “accomplishing the work He gave Him to do” (John 17:4).

II. John 12:28-30 – The Perplexed Crowds

The glorification of God as the apex purpose of the gospel was always fully embraced by Jesus, but the surrounding crowds could not comprehend that message. Even though the Father clearly shouted His affirmative declaration that the cross was for His glory (John 12:28), they didn't "get it." Instead, we are told that the crowds supposed it had "thundered," or "an angel had spoken" unintelligibly to Him (John 12:29). Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus maintained that the heavenly voice should have been heard and understood by the crowds, for it had come "for their sakes," not His (John 12:30).

We find in this account that the God-centeredness of the gospel is completely foreign to man-centered people.

III. John 12:31-33 – The Power of the Cross

Far from supposing the cross was a moment when Satan gained mastery over the Son of God, Jesus declared that by it He was casting out the ruler of this world (John 12:31). He conquered our enemy and rescued God's people from the clutch of just condemnation through His own voluntary Self-sacrifice. "He triumphed over" all spiritual forces of wickedness and made a display of His authority over them by His death (cf. Col. 2:14-15). Furthermore, the cross of Christ guarantees that He will draw all peoples to Himself (John 12:30). That is, the salvation Jesus offers is not only for the Jews, but for all nations (cf. verses 20-21).

CONCLUSION

The salvation of sinners is a work that was planned by God the Father, accomplished by God the Son, and applied by God the Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:3-14). Therefore, to God alone belongs all the glory.

Soli Deo Gloria is not an antiquated phrase reserved for history books. Rather, it is the chorus of the ages which God's people will sing to the enthroned Lamb Who was slain for our salvation (cf. Rev. 4:8-11; 5:9). *Soli Deo Gloria* (Rom. 11:33-36).