

# Sola Fide (Faith Alone)

## Key Issue / Question

How can I be justified [made right] before God?

## Point of Contention

Teaching of Rome	Teaching of the Reformation
Faith in Christ + Good Works => Justification	Faith in Christ => Justification + Good Works
Note that 'Good Works' acts as a requirement for Justification	Sola Fide Faith in Christ Alone is all that you need for Justification. 'Good Works' is now a fruit/evidence of faith in Christ.

Comment:

The core point of dispute of the Protestant Reformation was the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Out of the 5 Solas, Sola Fide was the spark that ignited the Reformation. The key issue is deeply personal: How can an unjust person such as I, possibly survive the judgment of a just and holy God?

*[Now, you need to know something of the Roman Catholic teachings. As you read it, observe how much differences there are between Rome and what you have been taught in the catechisms; see how much of the gospel has been corrupted until it has become another gospel; and see why the reformers regarded Rome as the apostate church, the false church.]*

For the Roman Catholic Church, justification begins with baptism (known as the first plank of justification), in which the person who is baptised receives an infusion of "justifying grace"; something happens inwardly in which the soul is infused with divine grace. *[Rome mixes up justification and sanctification].* If the person

assents and cooperates with the infused grace, then you are in a state of justification [*This is essentially the error of baptismal regeneration. The source of error is in Rome's view of the sacraments... see the notes on Sola Christus*]. You remain in that state of justification unless you commit a mortal sin. [*Catholics believe that sins are venial or mortal. Venial sins inflict a slight wound to the soul, but mortal sins are so evil that they're considered deadly – they kill grace*]. If you commit a mortal sin, you will become **un-justified** [hence Rome teaches that you can lose your salvation], because the mortal sin kills the inhabiting grace that was infused into you at baptism. So now, you need to be **re-justified**. This is done via another sacrament called the sacrament of **PENANCE** (which Rome calls the second plank of justification). In this sacrament, you need to go to a priest to confess all your sins, the priest will then assign you a penance to perform, you then say a prayer of contrition, thereafter the priest, acting in the person of Christ, will absolve you from your sins, and then you leave the confessional to do your penance. A penance may be to do something nice for your enemy every day for a week. It may be to visit a nursing home or hospital one day a week for a month. It may be to donate time to a soup kitchen or clothing bank. It may involve any one of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy. Or it may be a set of prayers, such as saying the *Our Father* or the *Hail Mary*, a certain number of times. **Penance is something you DO; it is that 'Good Work' for you to DO in order to be re-justified.**

Hence Rome teaches: Faith in Christ + Good Works (PENANCE) => Justification

In contrast, the Reformers taught that faith in the person and work of Christ is all that is needed to be saved (Rom 1:17, Gal 2:16). The contention about salvation is **NOT** about Faith in Christ per se. Rather, it is about

Faith in Christ + **SOMETHING ELSE**    OR    Faith in Christ **ALONE**

Is there a '**SOMETHING ELSE**' to add onto Faith. The answer is that **NOTHING ELSE is needed**. Faith in Christ **ALONE** is all you need for Justification. And if your faith is a true faith, then good works will be the evidence / fruit / proof of that faith

## Westminster Standards

- **WSC 33:** What is justification?  
A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the **righteousness of Christ** imputed to us, and **received BY FAITH ALONE**.

- **WSC 86:** What is faith in Jesus Christ?  
A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel
- **WSC 30:** How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?  
A: The **Spirit** applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by **working faith in us**, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.
- **WSC 31:** What is effectual calling?  
A: Effectual calling is the **work of God's Spirit**, whereby, *[HE FIRST REGENERATES US:]* convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, *[AND THEN...]* he doth persuade and **enable us** *[BY WORKING FAITH IN US, SO THAT WE HAVE THE FAITH ...]* to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel. *[... AND THAT IS WHY THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL TO YOU IS EFFECTIVE, WHILE TO OTHERS IT IS NOT].*

Do you realise that WSC31 is teaching you a very important truth, that:  
"Regeneration precedes Faith"

Regeneration happens first, and then we exercise faith.

"Regeneration" = Born again; our spiritually dead soul is brought back to life. By nature, in Adam, you are SPIRITUALLY DEAD, and spiritually dead people CANNOT EXERCISE FAITH, because faith in Christ is a SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY OF THE SOUL. You have to be made spiritually alive first, and then you can exercise faith.

## Scriptural Proofs

- **[Rom 1:17]** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.**
- **[Gal 2:16]** Knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

- **[Rom 10:9-13]** That if **thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, **Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**
- **[James 2:14-26]**. This passage teaches that true faith produces good works.

## Other Quotations

- *Martin Luther on Rom 1:17*  
 “There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely, by faith. And this is the meaning. The righteousness of God is revealed by the Gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which the merciful God justifies us by faith. Here, I felt that I was altogether born again and the very gates of paradise opened up before me.”
- *John Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, Book 3, Chapter 18, Section 2*  
 Let it be a fixed principle in our hearts, that the kingdom of heaven is not the hire of servants, but the inheritance of sons.
- *Martin Luther*  
 “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.”

*[Note: You cannot see ‘Faith’ in the heart. Neither can you see ‘Justification’. What can you see? ‘Good Works’. So how do you know that what you cannot see is real? By observing the evidence / fruit in the Good Works. So if the faith is real, then it will produce the fruit of good works. Hence a faith that saves is never alone.]*

- *R. C. Sproul, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*  
 “The relationship of faith and good works is one that may be distinguished but never separated... if good works do not follow from our profession of faith, it is a clear indication that we do not possess justifying faith.”