

## 17 September 2017 – 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

**Readings:** Genesis 50:15–21; Psalm 103:1–13; Romans 14:1–12; Matthew 18:21–35. **Theme:** *Sola Scriptura* (“Scripture Alone”).

**INTRO:** Scene from Luther. Although it is impossible to obtain exact figures, there is little doubt that the Bible is the world's best-selling and most widely distributed book. A survey by the Bible Society concluded that around 2.5 billion copies were printed between 1815 and 1975, but more recent estimates put the number at more than 5 billion.



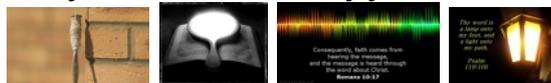
### I. DIVINELY INSPIRED. “Luther’s starting point.”

**2 Timothy 3:16**, “All Scripture is God-breathed.”

No controversy with Rome in his day. The problem is with our day.

*The Battle for the Bible*. “The basic problem is that a view of limited inerrancy invariably leads to concessions in matters of faith and practice. The basic need is for the church to be aware of the problem and to articulate her belief in Biblical inerrancy without fear and without compromise.”

**St. Paul’s**, “*accepts without reservation the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely written and inerrant Word of God, and as the only infallible source and norm for all matters of faith, doctrine and life.*”



### II. SOURCE AND NORM OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.

#### A. FAITH (“Law and Gospel”).

**Romans 7:9**, “I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.”

**Romans 10:17**, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”

#### B. PRACTICE.

**Psalm 119:105**, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

**2 Tim. 3:16-17**, ‘All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’  
“For him (Luther), Scripture was not simply an authoritative book, but the well to which he returned again and again for life.” (*Legacy of Luther*).



### III. SOURCE AND NORM OF INTERPRETATION.

### **A. It's all about Jesus.**

**John 5:39-40**, “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. **These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**”

**Luther**, “If... you would interpret well and truly, set Christ before you, for He is the man to Whom it all applies.”

### **B. Scripture interprets Scripture and will not contradict itself.**

**2 Peter 3:16**, “Some things Paul writes are difficult to understand. Irresponsible people who don't know what they are talking about twist them every which way. They do it to the rest of the Scriptures, too, destroying themselves as they do it.”

**LOL**, “Not all Scripture is equally clear, and Luther told his students that the exegete/preacher should treat a difficult passage no differently than Moses did the rock in the desert, which he smote with his rod until water gushed out for his thirsty people.”

### **C. Interpretation is to be done in Spirit led community.**

**John 16:12-13**, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”

“Luther never understood *sola Scriptura* to mean that the individual believer can understand the Bible by himself without being part of the wider body of Christ, instructed by faithful ministers.” (LOL, p. 120).



**CONCLUSION:** “Unless I am convinced by **Scripture and plain reason** – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is **captive to the Word of God.**” **LOL:** “Luther exercised the greatest care throughout his entire life not to impose his own understanding of God and God's ways onto Scripture – not that is, to stand above Scripture – but to submit to God's Word, and to let his understanding of God and God's ways be determined by the same... But it was never Luther's intention to stand alone beneath the ‘mighty tree’ of Scripture. His translation of the Bible into the language of the people was an invitation to others to join him in the shade of those branches and shake them effectively- that is, in such a way that they might yield their fruits. The greatest honour, therefore, that we can pay Luther in our day is not to rest content in knowing what he believed ‘every word’ of Scripture meant, but to accept his invitation and follow his lead in grasping ourselves, again and again, ‘every one of Scripture's branches’ and shaking them, confident that God will repeatedly bless our efforts and reveal to us ‘wonderful things from his Law.’ (Ps. 119:18).” **Illustration:** Marilyn's daughter-in-law's testimony. May God work through us the same. 😊