John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

 Here we are at the last of the 5 great lessons that have come from the Reformation of Luther. As we get ready to consider this last great lesson, do you or have you gotten a sense of how these 5 great lessons or principles fit together? I ask that, because in truth each of the great lessons is a lesson that has an “alone” in it. So we had Sola Christus, By Christ alone. Sola Gratia, By Grace alone. Soli Deo Gloria, To the Glory of God alone. Sola Fide, By Faith alone. And now, Sola Scriptura, By Scripture alone. So, how can you have five “alones”!

 That’s why I asked if you had a sense of how the five fit together. Because, in truth they really are the very same lesson but from a different viewpoint. It’s kind of like looking at something, let’s say a car. You can look from the front, the back, the right side, the left side, the top and the bottom. Each view provides a different perspective and yet each view is the same car. So it is with our 5 principles. Each shows a different perspective and yet each view is the very same faith and truth! Still not sure how that is true? Then let me explain.

 We started with By Christ alone. Everything really revolves around Christ. It is about him being promised, those promises fulfilled and what those promises bring to each of us. You cannot have the Christian religion without Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Then we went to By Grace Alone. In that lesson we heard how everything, the promising and sending of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins, the wonder and knowledge of God, even our call and keeping in the faith is a gift of the grace of God. Nothing can be and nothing can be sure without this grace of God in our lives. Because without God’s grace, there wouldn’t have been a Christ.

 From there we went To the Glory of God alone. That lesson went further in describing the majesty, power and salvation of God. It reminded us that everything, even in this sin sick world of ours is of and from God. God acts and moves for our good and salvation. God blesses or God withdraws his blessings. God reveals, quickens, and saves. God is the heart and core of all and thus we need to grasp that everything serves the glory of God, whether you want it to or not!

 Then we got to By Faith alone. As Lutherans, this is the one we focus on the most. I think we do that because it is perhaps the easiest of the 5 to grasp. We are going to heaven because of all that God has done and revealed in Jesus the Christ. It is not our works, our lives, our anything but rather the work and life of Jesus that totally and only counts. We get the benefit of what Jesus has done simply because we believe what Jesus has done and revealed. Yep, that simple! Believe in Jesus and all his benefits and wonders are yours! Heaven is your home. Eternal life is sure and certain. There is nothing, ever, to fear because of Jesus!

 Today we get to our last principle. Important! Well, just as important as the others. For that matter I hope to help you see that to dismiss any one of these 5 is really to dismiss the whole point of our God and faith!! Our theme: **BY SCRIPTURE ALONE!**

 To start today we are going to go right to the middle of our verse. It’s not a long verse. It says, **“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”** We need to contemplate the depth and meaning of two very important words found there. Those words are this: **YOUR WORD.** The importance of this is vast because I will point blank tell you that if you miss the wonder and depth of these two words, you miss the wonder and marvel of all that God is, has said and done!

 Who is **YOUR**? Well, note that our text is Jesus speaking. Actually our text is a part of what we commonly call the High Priestly prayer of Jesus, that last prayer of Jesus with his disciples, for his disciples and for all who would believe in him. If you look at the context of this word, a pronoun, you will grasp that we trace the person of this pronoun all the way back to verse 11, the words, **“Holy Father.”** So, the “Your” is God the Father, the Holy one, the Almighty, the Eternal, the Present everywhere one. Jesus clearly is referring to God, the Father and Holy God, revealing things about God and himself. What Jesus is revealing is something he calls: **Your word**!

 Should I remind you of our OT text? We heard from Deut. 4. There we were reminded of decrees and laws that Moses had given to God’s people on behalf of God. We are told then: **“Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it.”** We are reminded that this word of God is such that: **“Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.”** Of course, we recognize that God’s people back then and even up to Jesus’ day didn’t follow what was said. They acted as if the law was all there was, that living right, being right, saying the right things, following the right rituals was all there was to religion. The majority of Jews totally missed the promises of the Savior embedded in their laws. They missed how everything pointed to the Savior and the forgiveness of sin the Savior would bring. The truth is, that even back in the days of Moses, salvation was about the Savior, about the grace of God and having faith in alone in God. About how all honor and glory was to go to God because God was going to send the Christ, the Savior. The Jews got all this wrong because they didn’t grasp that Scripture is the word and revelation of God. The truth has been revealed by God. The wonder and marvel of God is revealed by God!

 So, I will go back to a simple statement I have made before. If your God is not capable of giving you an error free, understandable, clear and precise revelation of Himself and his Will, then why is that god your God? My God, the true God can and has done that. He has revealed all things necessary for our salvation in his Holy Word. In other words, I believe Jesus when he states quite clearly: “**Your word is truth!”** God’s Word, every jot and tittle is of and from God. Again, if you do not believe the Word to be God’s Word but rather the religious meanderings of men to be edited by men, understood at the will and desire of men, then you do not know or believe in the true and only God. Because clearly you have rejected this very simple truth of Jesus that God’s Word is truth!

 Oh, Pastor, you are being way too hard about this. You mean to say that you think that if I or anyone should doubt, twist, subtract from or add to the Bible then that person is not really a believer? In truth, I will leave the final judgment to God but yes, I do think God has clearly stated that fact! And if you don’t believe me then let’s consider a few other things.

 Take our Epistle reading for today. Galatians 1:6-9. Here is the Apostle Paul under verbal inspiration writing God’s Word. He says, **“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel-- 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!**

The people Paul was talking to had changed what God’s Word said, what the Apostle’s and evangelists had taught and written down concerning Jesus and his work. Paul calls this “a different gospel.” He even goes so far as to state that should others or even and angel from heaven preach different from what has been recorded, then let them be condemned! This is so important because once you begin to change the Word, the intent and clear meaning of the Word as God has given it, then clearly you are abandoning the truth and marvel of Jesus! And note that Paul directly applies this to the Gospel! You cannot change the Gospel! You cannot deny the death of Jesus for sin or even deny the existence sin. You cannot reject the resurrection of Jesus in any way but only believe the clear and true confession of what God has given you! Jesus has physically and actually risen from the dead and lives and rules over all things forever!! To change anything in regard to the revealed written Word of God is to deny and reject the truth and to actuality be turning to another gospel, which is not the gospel at all!!! Then you do not have a Savior, or a God, or even a clue about the truth of God!

 Or consider our full Gospel for today, John 171-19! Did you pay attention to what Jesus said? He literally says that he has come to do the Father’s will, he has done that and is now preparing to be returned to the glory that was His before the world began! Jesus says that what he is doing is bringing eternal life, that people may know God and Jesus Christ. That He, Jesus, has revealed God, given God’s Word, is God’s Word and so on! Are you telling me you don’t believe what Jesus says? You don’t believe his is from God? You don’t believe he came to complete the promises and works of God for the granting of eternal life? You don’t believe He is the revelation of God and that His Words are God’s Word? Then why are you even a Christian? Because if the Bible is not true, if these words of Jesus are not absolutely true, why would you believe and follow him….the guy clearly was some sort of delusional, psychological and mentally disabled individual. Because when you read the gospel reading clearly you will grasp that Jesus thinks and believes He is God! So much so that He is asking and pleading with his Father that the believers in Him be protected, sanctified and delivered safe to the kingdom of heaven as God wills it. All of this is declared the truth, the truth that sanctifies, that truth that is God’s Word!

 So people, why are you surprised that God’s Word and the message of Jesus is being attacked, undermined, ridiculed, sliced and diced by so many of this world? Why are you incredulous that many of the mainline denominations have abandoned the truth in the inspiration, the infallibility and absolute power of God to reveal in His Word? Did you think Satan wouldn’t do that? Why? Satan attacked Jesus himself! Why wouldn’t he attack the Word too!

 So there it is. Our faith stands upon the wonder and marvel of God’s Word. Reject the word and you reject Jesus and the truth of God. How blessed we are that we have the knowledge of the promises of God fulfilled. We know how God sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins and how Jesus rose from the dead as proof of His eternal victory for us.

 We know these things because God has revealed them. We read them and believe. We hear God's Word and obey. We follow God's path and direction because His hope and His desire for us is clearly revealed in the Bible. There is no doubt. There is no second guessing. God's Word is true and flawless in what it says and in what it proclaims. Faith thus hears and believes. Faith hears and believes in God's knowledge.

 Dear people, the purpose of faith is to lead you in God's will. We know God's will because of God's Word. We know God's promises because of God's Word. We know God's power because of God's Word. We know God's salvation because of God's Word. In God's Word is the object, goal, and purpose of faith. In God's Word is the revelation and power of faith because God stands behind and with His Word. We know that Jesus is God’s Word! In other words, we cannot speak of faith unless we hear, learn, and inwardly digest that Word of God. Our faith will be directly proportional to our use of God's Word. Use it poorly and we have a poor faith. Use it abundantly and we have an abundance of faith. Faith believes in His Word. God grant you such faith. Amen.