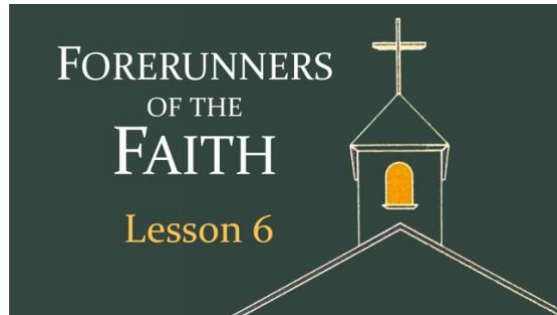


Forerunners of the Faith



Grace and Truth

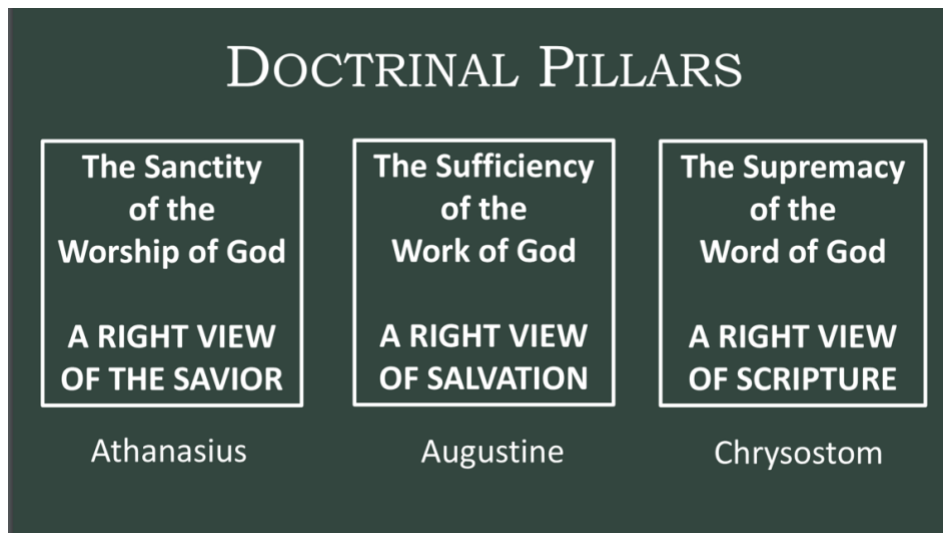
Key Passage

John 1:14–17

“14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has been ahead of me, for He existed before me.’” 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Introduction

1. The **Word** of God (in Scripture): The true church views Scripture alone as its final authority.
2. The **work** of God (in salvation): The true church understands that sinners are justified solely by God’s grace through faith on account of Christ.
3. The **worship** of God (in spirit and truth): The true church worships the Triune God in purity of devotion and purity of doctrine.



Forerunners of the Faith

Augustine

- Aurelius Augustinus was born in modern-day Algeria.
- His mother, Monica, was a devout Christian who prayed earnestly for her son's salvation.
- In his Confessions, Augustine explains how he left home to pursue satisfaction in worldly pleasure.
- "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in You, Lord."
- His search for satisfaction also led him into the Manichaeism heresy.
- Eventually, he abandoned Manichaeism for Neo-Platonism.
- In Milan, he went to hear the famous preacher Ambrose and was ultimately influenced by the powerful content of Ambrose's sermons.
- God used Ambrose, as well as some of Augustine's friends, to draw the young man to Himself.
- One day, he opened his Bible to Romans 13:13–14 and was converted as he read that text.
- As a new believer, he considered a life of monastic contemplation, but was drawn into pastoral ministry.
- In 395, he became co-bishop of the church in Hippo Regius (modern-day Annaba, Algeria).
- Important works include his treatise On the Trinity and The City of God.
- Augustine became one of the most influential theologians in church history.

Augustine and Grace

- His defense of the gospel of grace, in the face of a false movement called Pelagianism, resulted in Augustine being known as _____.
- Pelagius claimed sinners are born basically good, without a sin nature, and therefore can merit salvation through their own efforts. Augustine strongly disagreed.
- Sinners are not justified on the basis of their own _____. They are saved by _____.
- Old Testament saints, likewise, were not saved by works, but rather through _____.

Forerunners of the Faith

- Because salvation is by grace, and not by works, even the worst of sinners can be saved.
- The gospel of grace precludes anyone from boasting about their salvation.

Augustine and Truth

- INERRANCY – Because God cannot lie, Scripture is free from error.
- AUTHORITY – Because it comes from God, Scripture comes with divine authority.
- SUFFICIENCY – Scripture contains all we need for life and godliness.
- Augustine demonstrated a clear commitment to the inerrancy, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture.
- This same commitment will be seen over a thousand years later during the Protestant Reformation.

John Chrysostom

- Born in Antioch and trained in rhetoric as a young man.
- Lived as a monk in the wilderness for two years. During that time, he damaged his health, but also memorized portions of Scripture.
- Back in Antioch, John began to teach through the New Testament, going verse-by-verse and explaining the text in a literal way.
- His oratorical ability earned him the nickname “Chrysostom,” which means “_____.”
- In 397, he was appointed the bishop of Constantinople, the capital city of the eastern Roman Empire.
- His preaching against worldliness and those who flaunted their wealth got him into trouble with the empress.
- The conflict escalated to the point that he was banished from Constantinople and sent into exile. He died in exile in 407.
- His sermons from numerous NT books have survived to the present.

Forerunners of the Faith

Chrysostom and Grace

- Because John was so carefully tied to the biblical text, his preaching in many places affirms that salvation is by grace through faith alone.

Chrysostom and Truth

- INERRANCY – The Word of God is perfectly true.
- AUTHORITY – God’s Word is the authoritative basis for what we teach and believe.
- SUFFICIENCY – God’s Word instructs believers so they may be complete in the faith.
- CLARITY – God’s revelation is understandable and should be interpreted in a literal way.
- As Chrysostom explains, proper Bible interpretation involves a clear understanding of what the passage means.
- Sound Bible study involves looking at:
 - the details like the _____,
 - the flow of the argument _____ (the sense),
 - the author’s _____ (the aim of the speaker),
 - and the _____ (the cause and the occasion)

Putting It All Together

- Much more could be said about both Augustine and Chrysostom, not to mention other Post-Nicene leaders.
- Augustine and Chrysostom were committed to Grace and Truth.
- These convictions resonated with the Reformers who would come a thousand years later.
- The 5 Solas may have been expressed as such at the Reformation, but the biblical truths behind them were not new ideas.
- These truths were foundational convictions of men like Augustine, Chrysostom, and others.