

Luke's Gospel emphasizes Jesus' compassion, grace, and call to repentance and transformation, which ties closely to the ideas of sanctification and reformation in addressing any form of sin. Luke consistently highlights Christ's mission to seek out the lost, restore the broken and call sinners to a new way of life.

Here's how these themes connect:

Sanctification in Luke: Transformation Through Grace

In Luke, sanctification is reflected in the way Jesus interacts with sinners, offering them grace, healing, and a path toward holiness.

- **Luke 5:31-32 – *“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”***
- **Jesus' ministry focuses on restoring those in need of moral and spiritual healing. Sanctification is the ongoing “treatment” that transforms sinners into disciples.**
- **The Woman Who Washed Jesus' Feet (Luke 7:36-50) – A woman, known for her sinful life, approaches Jesus with humility, washing His feet with her tears. Jesus forgives her sins, saying:**
- ***“Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (v. 50).***
- **This story mirrors sanctification – her encounter with Christ marks the beginning of a transformed life, led by grace.**

The story highlights the transformative power of faith and grace rather than adherence to rituals like baptism.

This strongly reflects the theological principle of justification by faith—a cornerstone of sola scriptura and the Protestant Reformation, emphasizing that salvation comes through faith alone (sola fide), not through works or sacraments.

In this narrative:

1. **Faith is the Key – The woman's actions demonstrate her faith and repentance. Although she performs a physical act (washing Jesus' feet), the emphasis is not on the act itself but on the heart behind it. Jesus acknowledges her faith, not her deeds, as the source of her salvation.**

2. **Grace, Not Law – Jesus extends forgiveness and grace without requiring any ritualistic prerequisites. This reflects the belief that God’s grace operates freely and abundantly, independent of formal structures like baptism.**
3. **The Role of Baptism – In Christian tradition, baptism is seen as a sacrament of initiation and public declaration of faith. However, the woman’s encounter with Jesus suggests that God’s grace can precede baptism. Many theological perspectives (especially in Protestant traditions) hold that while baptism is important, it is not a prerequisite for salvation.**
4. **Sola Scriptura Perspective – If approached from the sola scriptura standpoint (Scripture alone), the emphasis would be on the direct words of Jesus in the text. Since Jesus declares her saved by faith alone, this suggests that salvation does not require baptism in this instance.**

Connection to Sanctification:

Luke shows that sanctification is not about condemnation but love that invites transformation. Sexual immorality or any sin is met with grace, but the expectation is a life redirected toward holiness.

Reformation in Luke: A Call to Repentance and Realignment

Reformation in Luke reflects Jesus’ call to repent, realign with God’s will, and bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

- **Luke 13:3 – *“Unless you repent, you too will all perish.”***
- **Reformation involves a radical change of heart and a return to God’s ways, reflecting Paul’s teachings in Galatians about leaving behind the old self.**
- **Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32): The prodigal son’s journey represents personal reformation – he strays into immoral living but returns in repentance, finding grace from the father.**
- ***“For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (v. 24).***
- **The father’s embrace signifies God’s willingness to restore those who turn back to Him.**
- **Zacchaeus’ Reformation (Luke 19:1-10): Zacchaeus, a corrupt tax collector, reforms his life after encountering Jesus:**

- *“Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (v. 8).*
- Jesus responds: *“Today salvation has come to this house” (v. 9).*

Connection to Reformation:

Reformation in Luke’s Gospel reflects the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7). Jesus calls for repentance and realignment with God’s kingdom, echoing the themes of reforming sin through grace-driven transformation.

Jesus and Sexual Immorality in Luke:

While Luke’s Gospel doesn’t explicitly focus on sexual immorality as much as some other Gospels, the broader principle applies:

- Luke 11:39-41 – Jesus critiques the Pharisees for outward purity but inward corruption:
- *“You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.”*
- This reflects the need for internal sanctification and reformation, addressing the root of sin, including sexual immorality.
- Luke 8:2 mentions Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast out seven demons. Though tradition links her to sexual sin, the key point is her complete transformation and sanctification as she becomes a devoted follower of Christ.

Tying It All Together:

In Luke’s Gospel:

- Sanctification is the grace-filled journey where sinners are invited to follow Christ and grow in holiness.
- Reformation is the act of turning back to God, often after falling into sin, reflecting personal and communal transformation.
- Sexual immorality (or any sin) is met not with immediate condemnation but with an invitation to change – an expectation that the grace of Christ will lead to repentance and new life.

Ultimately, Luke’s Gospel aligns with the view that Jesus fulfills the law by offering a

path to holiness through love and grace. Sanctification and reformation work hand-in-hand, calling believers to leave behind sin and walk in the light of Christ.

Galatians 3:13-14 (NIV):

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”

14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

These verses highlight how Christ’s sacrifice frees believers from the burden of the law’s curse, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham. Through Jesus, salvation and the Holy Spirit are available to all, including the Gentiles, emphasizing unity and grace through faith. This ties into the larger theme in Galatians of justification by faith, not by works or adherence to the law.

The core message of Galatians 3:13-14. Paul is explaining that Jesus’ sacrifice fulfilled the requirements of the law and broke the curse that came from humanity’s inability to fully keep the law.

The Old Testament law was given to reveal sin and set a standard of holiness, but no one could perfectly uphold it. As a result, the law brought condemnation and highlighted the need for redemption. Paul references *Deuteronomy 21:23* (“Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole”) to show that Jesus took upon Himself the curse that humanity deserved, effectively becoming the ultimate atoning sacrifice.

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection:

- The penalty of the law was satisfied.
- God’s grace and love now offer salvation, not through works, but by faith in Christ.
- The promise given to Abraham—blessing and righteousness through faith—extends to everyone, including the Gentiles.

This doesn’t mean the Old Testament is obsolete, but rather that Christ completes and fulfills it. His grace doesn’t negate the law but supersedes it by providing a new covenant rooted in love, mercy, and faith rather than legalistic adherence.

Paul emphasizes this again in Galatians 5:14: *“For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

Essentially, Jesus embodied the heart of the law—love—making righteousness

accessible to all who believe in Him. This unity through Christ reflects the idea of one universal Church under God's grace, transcending denominational divisions.

Sola Scriptura—"Scripture alone"—is a principle that asserts the Bible is the highest and final authority in matters of faith and practice. It emerged during the Protestant Reformation as a response to church traditions and teachings that were seen as deviating from biblical truth.

In relation to Galatians 3:13-14 and the fulfillment of the law through Christ, *Sola Scriptura* reinforces the idea that:

1. Scripture reveals Christ's fulfillment of the law – The Bible consistently points to Jesus as the culmination of the Old Testament law and prophecies (Matthew 5:17). His sacrifice and grace are central to salvation, as outlined in Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews.
2. Authority rests in the Word, not traditions – *Sola Scriptura* emphasizes that human traditions or church bylaws cannot override or contradict what Scripture teaches. The New Testament clearly presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the law, which *Sola Scriptura* upholds as the guiding truth for Christians.
3. Grace over legalism – Galatians is a direct challenge to legalism, which was a key issue for the early church (e.g., circumcision debates). *Sola Scriptura* points believers back to the Bible's teaching that faith in Christ alone justifies and brings salvation, not adherence to additional rules or traditions beyond Scripture.

How This Connects to Law and Grace

The doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* affirms that:

- The law's purpose was to point to Christ (Galatians 3:24 – "The law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.").
- Jesus' death and resurrection fulfilled the law's demands, meaning grace and faith now govern salvation (Romans 6:14 – "For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.").
- Scripture alone testifies to this reality, standing above any human interpretation or addition.

Implications for the Church

Many Protestant churches, influenced by *Sola Scriptura*, emphasize that:

- The Bible teaches unity in Christ beyond denominations and rituals.
- Christ's love and grace transcend Old Testament legal requirements.
- The church is called to focus on Scripture's message of faith, grace, and love rather than enforce extra-biblical regulations.

This connects with my view that God desires unity among Christians as one Church. *Sola Scriptura* upholds that unity by anchoring believers in the shared truth of God's Word, which reveals Christ as the fulfillment of the law and the foundation for salvation.

In the context of Galatians 3:13-14, *Sola Scriptura*, and the fulfillment of the law by Christ, sanctification and reformation are seen as ongoing processes rooted in grace, shaped by Scripture, and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification: Grace-Filled Transformation

Sanctification is the process by which believers are made holy, growing in Christlikeness after being justified by faith. While justification happens at the moment of salvation (by faith alone), sanctification is a lifelong journey.

Key Aspects in This Context:

- Scripture as the Guide – *Sola Scriptura* affirms that the Bible provides the blueprint for holy living. Passages like *Galatians 5:22-23 (fruit of the Spirit)* describe how believers reflect Christ's nature.
- Grace, Not Law, Transforms – Sanctification is not about rigidly following laws but about living by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Christ's fulfillment of the law means that obedience flows from love and gratitude, not obligation.
- Partnership with the Spirit – The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers, aligning their lives with the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). This echoes Galatians 3:14: “*so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*”

In essence: Sanctification reflects the ongoing work of grace that shapes believers into the image of Christ, emphasizing that transformation happens through the Spirit, not by returning to Old Testament law.

Reformation: Realignment with Scripture

Reformation refers to the process of returning to biblical truth when the church strays from it. Historically, the Protestant Reformation challenged church practices that contradicted Scripture, calling for a return to *Sola Scriptura*.

Key Aspects in This Context:

- **Christ at the Center – Reformation, like sanctification, centers on Christ’s fulfillment of the law. The call is to ensure that the church’s practices reflect the gospel of grace rather than legalism or tradition-based burdens.**
- **Correcting False Teachings – In Galatians, Paul is essentially leading a *reformation* within the early church by opposing the Judaizers, who insisted on adherence to the Mosaic Law for salvation. Paul’s reformation message was clear: Faith in Christ, not the law, justifies.**
- **Unity in the Body – Reformation often seeks to restore unity by dissolving unnecessary divisions. Galatians 3:28 (“There is neither Jew nor Gentile...”) reflects the unifying power of the gospel, a core message of reformation.**

In essence: Reformation realigns the church with the truth that grace, not legalism, is the foundation of salvation. This mirrors my belief in one universal Church, where Scripture leads the way to unity and holiness.

Connection to Church Unity

My belief in one universal Church under God, transcending denominations, resonates deeply with the ideas of sanctification and reformation:

- **Sanctification shapes individuals, drawing them closer to Christ and fostering unity through shared growth in holiness.**
- **Reformation corrects misalignments, calling the church back to Christ-centered, grace-filled faith rather than divisive rules or traditions.**

Together, they reflect the heart of Galatians—faith expressing itself through love (Galatians 5:6) and a church unified by the gospel, not fragmented by differences in bylaws or traditions.

Prepared by: Teddy Tran

