



SOLAS
FIVE
CENTURIES

A Study Series on The Five Solas of The Reformation
~ Five Hundred Years On ~

CAMPBELL**TOWN**

ANGELICAN CHURCHES

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Introduction to 'The Five Solas' Series

500 years ago

On October 31, 1517, a German monk named Martin Luther nailed a document known as 'The 95 Theses' to the Castle Church door in Wittenburg, with the hope of generating good debate on some issues he had with the instituted church of the day. He had no idea it would be the watershed moment, which shook the church and sparked what is referred to as 'The Reformation'.

Luther was not alone in his disagreements with the Roman Catholic Church. He was not even the first person to raise objection, but he is remembered for his firm stand despite the threat of his life (and even his salvation) to uphold what the bible teaches about salvation over and above any institution of man.

The Five Solas

The essential teachings of the gospel for which Luther fought and which have been sacrificially preserved for us have been summarised into five key ideas or truths. They are remembered as five latin phrases: *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Christus*, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide* and *Sola Deo Gloria*. The motto in English can remind us that salvation is according to Scripture alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, for the glory of God alone.

Each of the five *solas* have something unique and critical to bring to our Christian knowledge and understanding. It's not a contradiction to say that there are five things which all stand alone. Rather, each of these five teachings stand on their own against their alternatives. Scripture is the only and ultimate authority on salvation. Christ is the only mediator between man and God, whom we must adopt as our Lord. Grace speaks of the gift of salvation without repayment nor interest. Our only basic response to God for all that he has done and

given is to put our faith in him. And God's glory must not be shared with any other for he, and he alone, is God.

Our Aim

In this series of bible studies and sermons, we aim to examine each of these teachings to be sure we understand their importance. These truths are life giving. They are God given. They are as important today as they were 500 years ago or ever before. As you follow this series, ask yourself how each of these five truths remain under attack in our contemporary culture.

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst.” **Paul, 1 Timothy 1:15**

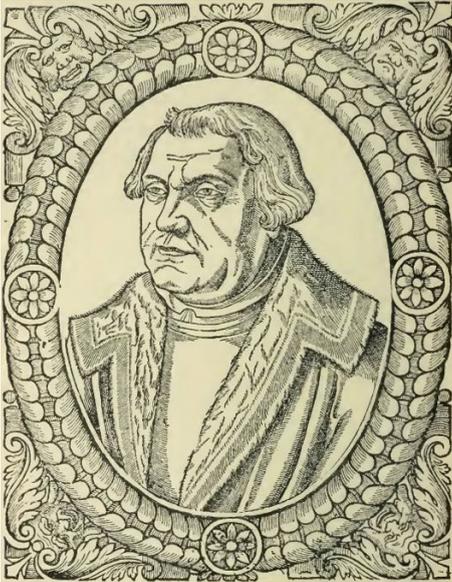
Study 1 - Regarding the Reformation

Always Death (The Black Death)

New Life (The Renaissance)

Where's Hope? (The Church)

Martin Luther (1483-1546)



In 1517, Martin Luther published the *Ninety-five Theses* questioning the sale of indulgences. “The Theses, it has been well said, ‘are ninety-five sledge-hammer strokes delivered at the grossest ecclesiastical abuse of the age.’ With these strokes Luther’s career as a reformer opened: the Reformation in Germany began.”¹

The below bullet points follow a documentary on the life and beliefs of Martin Luther. The short film can be found at lutherdocumentary.com.

LUTHER - The Life and Legacy of the German Reformer

The life of Luther

- His upbringing and first studies in law
- The thunder storm
- The troubled soul and burning concern
- Indulgences
- His hate of God - why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow?
- Romans 1:17 by faith alone

¹ The images and content of the short biographies in this booklet are extracted from ‘Beza’s “Icones”: Contemporary Portraits of Reformers of Religion and Letters’, 1906, and in part from Heinze, Rudolph W. ‘Reform and Conflict: From the Medieval World to the Wars of Religion’ Volume Four, 2005.

- The 95 theses nailed to the door - the singular moment that birthed the reformation
- 1518 to 1521
- The diet of worms
- “Are you alone wise?”
- The Protestant movement
- Luther in exile continues to write
- The church is about proclamation of the word

The theology of Luther

- Explanations of the 95 theses - repentance or penance
- Luther the preacher
- Luther the songwriter
- Luther the family man

The fire still ablaze

- Conform or die
- Luther’s last sermon
- The challenge for us today
- The hope for us today

Sermon Outline - Scripture Alone

The Hiddenness of the voice of God

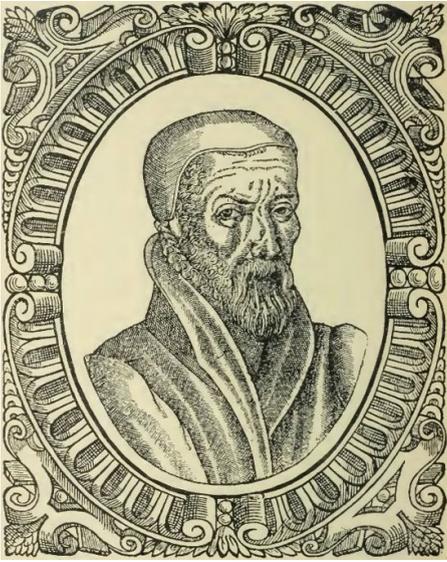
The Bible is God's Word

Discovering the voice of God

Feeding on the Word of God

Being Transformed by the Word

William Tyndale (c.1495-1536)



The most significant of the early English Protestant martyrs was William Tyndale. The place and time of his birth remains uncertain. His University career is also unclear but he studied in both Oxford and Cambridge. Hearing many conversations about the “New Learning” from the European mainland and of Luther, Tyndale resolved to translate the Bible into English from the original languages. Tyndale is

recorded as saying to a Roman Catholic antagonist, “if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.”

He was an ordained English minister who preached in London but, having no support to translate the Bible into English in England, he left in May, 1524 and never returned to his home soil.

In just over a year, his translation of the New Testament was being printed from Cologne, Germany. By 1526, his English translation was being eagerly bought and read in England itself. Although many were also purchased for the purpose of burning, Tyndale is reported to be content with this since firstly, people will cry out that the word of God is being burned and secondly, that it financed an improved second edition! By 1530 six editions were dispersed.

The Pentateuch was printed at Marburg in 1530-31. He published a translation of Jonah in 1534. He was imprisoned for fifteen months and executed for heresy on October 6, 1536. His last prayer displayed unshaken faith in God, unfaltering loyalty to his earthly sovereign - “Lord! Open the King of England’s eyes.”

Study on Grace Alone

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

Galatians 4:4-5

“What was the purpose of this subjection of Christ to the law but to acquire righteousness for us, undertaking to pay what we could not pay? [...] the righteousness found in Christ alone is reckoned as ours.”

John Calvin, Institutes XVII, 5

Grace is an amazing word. Philip Yancey points out that it's a word we have preserved well in our modern world, like when we say *grace* before a meal to recognise our food is a gift from God, we can be *grateful* of the kindness of others, good news *gratifies* us, we *congratulate* others and we are *gracious* when we host a meal.²

The word *grace* carries the very gospel with it. No other word is suitable to describe how salvation comes to us - at no merit of our own, undeserved and unachieved. One way of remembering the truth in this study is through the following acronym: God's Righteousness At Christ's Expense. I hope that you will see how the scriptures teach us this very thing.

Discuss: *What's an example of a gracious act?*

² Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace*, 1997, p12.

Read Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1. What is demonstrated and how?

2. Rewrite that verse in your own words.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

3. How do Verses 1-3 describe the state of people before being saved?

4. To whom do these verses refer?

5. Look up Romans 3:10-20. What hope does the human race have?

Some key terms explained:

- *righteousness* - being right with God
- *ruler of the kingdom of the air* - Satan
- *sin* - failing to do what is right
- *transgression* - breaking the law, rebellion
- *wrath* - the righteous anger of God toward sinners

Read Ephesians 3:4-9

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

6. How many sentences do you count in this section and how many times does the word *grace* appear?

7. How does this passage describe grace?

8. List the descriptions of God and what he has done.

9. Lookup the following passages and use them to respond to God in prayer.

Galatians 2:20-21

Psalm 32:1-2

1 Peter 2:24

Mark 10:45

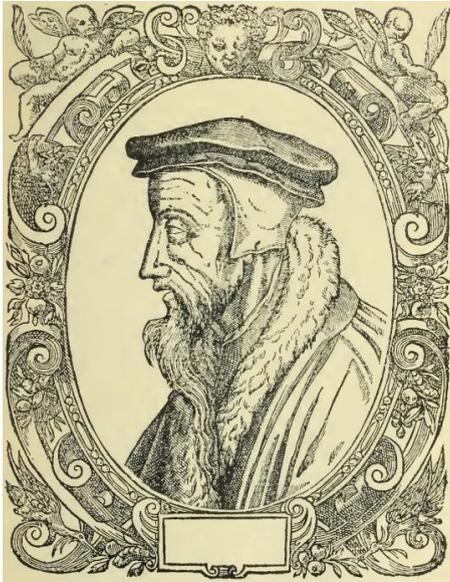
1 Timothy 1:15

1 John 1:5-10

1 Peter 1:18-21

2 Corinthians 5:21

John Calvin (1509-1564)



John Calvin was born in France and was only eight when Luther published his 95 Theses. Whereas Luther had moved from the study of law into the study of theology, Calvin took the opposite path.

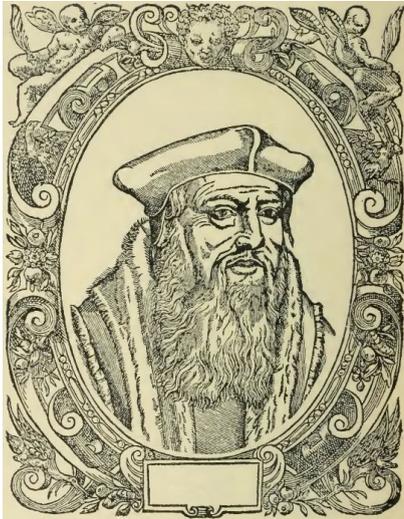
Shortly after his father died (1531), Calvin had left his law career and desired to live a quiet life filled with study and writing. Between 1533 and 1534 he experienced an evangelical conversion. He wrote his first and much shorter edition of his *Institutes* which aimed to be a simple explanation of the Christian faith with the aim to help new converts to know how to live their faith.

He came to Geneva and was enticed to stay there the remainder of his days with the exception of some brief travels, including an influential period in Strasburg. Geneva was an entirely reformed city and gave Calvin scope to redefine what a Christian community ought to look like. Through his work in Geneva and his writings, Calvin became the dominant, directing spirit of the Reformation movement across Europe.

On top of his expanded edition of the *Institutes*, his vast work covered commentaries on nearly the whole of the books of the Bible. He was always a frail man but his writing, preaching, lecturing and reading to others took its toll on him in 1564. He was a man with a sharp mind and a desire to promote “the holiness and majesty of God, and of finding for the heart an eternal anchorage, in which it can securely repose in the consciousness of election by free grace.”

Sermon Outline - Christ Alone

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)



This English reformer was born in the county of Nottingham to a wealthy and ancient family. He became a Doctor and Lecturer in Divinity. King Henry VIII found favour in Cranmer's opinion regarding the nullity of the marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer had suggested bypassing the Pope and going straight to Scripture for a verdict.

When sent to Rome, Cranmer found favour with the Pope and returned to England as Grand Penitentiary of England. In 1532, Henry nominated Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury and made Primate of all England on March 30, 1533.

For twenty years, Cranmer more or less sided with the protestants and took the chief part in bringing about the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles are credited to him and "set forth principles of theology in which Calvin or Knox would have found scarcely a word to disapprove."

When Queen Mary succeeded Henry on the throne, England was returned to Papal power and Cranmer was taken to the Tower for treason and heresy. Under great pressure, he signed no less than six recantations and on March 21, 1556, he was led from prison to St Mary's Church, there to make his final recantation in public. To the audience's surprise, he spoke against Romish dogmas and practices and stood firm once again for the Protestant faith. He is recorded as saying "Forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished, therefore, may come to the fire, it shall be first burned." He was executed that day and, to his word, punished his hand in the fire first.

Study on the Glory of God Alone

*“Resolved: that every man should live to the glory of God.
Resolved second: that whether others do this or not, I will.”*

Martin Luther

*“We never truly glory in him unless we have utterly put off
our own glory. [...] whoever glories in himself glories
against God.”*

John Calvin, Institutes XIII, 2

How do you define the glory of God? It’s a word that captures God’s majesty, holiness, righteousness and deeds. When we give glory to the LORD, we honour him and describe his greatness. If we were to see God’s glory, like Moses, then we would be in the presence of perfection. In Psalm 19, we are reminded that the heavens declare the glory of God because they show us the work of his hands. God’s glory is like broadcasting the greatness and awesomeness of God. As sinners, we deny God’s glory by glorifying and praising ourselves. As saints, saved by grace, we proclaim to the world that God is great and only he is worthy of praise and honour. We seek to do all things for the glory of God.

Discuss: *A Christian who does not glorify God above all others, even themselves, is like someone who treks to the Grand Canyon, measures it, photographs it, edits the movie footage of their trip but fails to stop and take a look.*

Read Psalm 24

- ¹ *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;*
- ² *for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.*
- ³ *Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in his holy place?*
- ⁴ *The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.*
- ⁵ *They will receive blessing from the Lord
and vindication from God their Savior.*
- ⁶ *Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob:*
- ⁷ *Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*
- ⁸ *Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.*
- ⁹ *Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*
- ¹⁰ *Who is he, this King of glory?
The Lord Almighty—
he is the King of glory.*

1. How does the psalmist glorify God in Verses 1-4?

2. How is the King described in Verses 7-10?

Read Romans 11:33-36

³³ *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

*How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!*

³⁴ *“Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?”^b*

³⁵ *“Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?”^c*

³⁶ *For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Paul’s letter to the Romans is perhaps the greatest work in theology ever written. In Chapters 9-11, he tackles some of the hardest questions of the Christian faith showing that God is completely innocent and fully merciful toward humanity. Paul did an amazing job in that book. But in Chapter 11, Verse 33, Paul himself explodes into praise to God! Oh! The depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

4. How is Paul’s song of praise a model for us in glorifying God?

5. Which of the Five Solas do you see observed in these verses?

Read Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

6. What does true worship look like?

7. How do the four other solas lead to this one?

8. How do you glorify God in the following areas of life?

- Family
- Work
- Church
- Meditation
- Government/society
- Recreation

Sermon Outline - Faith Alone
