

The Story & Significance of the **5 SOLAS**

# The Reformation: Something Worth Remembering & Celebrating!

Lesson One

October 31, 2017 Will Be the **500th** Anniversary of the Reformation!

## Is the Reformation Worth Remembering and Celebrating? You DECIDE!

### 1. God Used a Monk with a Mallet to Spark a REVOLUTION.

#### What Happened 500 Years Ago?

- ❖ On **Wednesday October 31, 1517** (according to tradition around 2:00 in the afternoon) a monk by the name of **Martin Luther** approached the church in the university town of Wittenberg, Germany to nail his **95 Theses** to the church doors. These 95 “**points of debate**” were focused on a certain practice of what we now know as Roman Catholic Church (RCC), which in Luther’s day was the ruling church that exercised control over the spiritual lives of nearly all the people in Europe.
- ❖ With each hammer blow, Martin Luther was unknowingly unleashing a revolution that still impacts our lives today!
  - 1) An **ECONOMIC** revolution.
  - 2) A **POLITICAL** revolution.
  - 3) An **EDUCATIONAL** revolution.
  - 4) A **CULTURAL/SOCIAL** revolution.
  - 5) A **SPIRITUAL** revolution – *a reformation* - that we still benefit from today!

#### Defining Our Terms

- ❖ “**To reform**” means: To cause **A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER** by correcting or removing what is wrong or in error.
- ❖ “**The Reformation**” was a turning point in church history that that was a “**BACK TO THE BIBLE**” movement of God.

#### **A Movement of God that Led to...**

Open **BIBLES** in the 1600s > Open **HEARTS** in the 1700s > Open **DOORS** in the 1800s!

#### **The Most Powerful Force in All of History**

**Is a Common MAN with a Common BIBLE Committed to an Uncommon PURPOSE!**

- ❖ “**Reformation Theology**” is usually associated with the **FIVE** “Solas” (“Alone”) that we are going to study.
  - 1) It is Bible-**BASED**: **Sola Scriptura** = Scripture Alone
  - 2) It is God-**GLORIFYING**: **Soli Deo Gloria** = For God’s Glory Alone
  - 3) It is Christ-**CENTERED**: **Solus Christus** = In Christ Alone
  - 4) It is Gospel-**PROCLAIMING**: **Sola Fide** = Through Faith Alone
  - 5) It is Life-**CHANGING**: **Sola Gratia** = By Grace Alone

**The Five Solas Are the Essence of Saving Faith and the True Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**ACCORDING to the AUTHORITY of SCRIPTURE ALONE  
WE ARE SAVED by GRACE ALONE through FAITH ALONE  
in CHRIST ALONE for the GLORY of GOD ALONE!**

“A move to place God as He has revealed Himself in Christ at the center of the church’s life and thought.”  
– Carl Trueman

- ❖ “**Reformed**” is used to describe a **doctrinal system** (Reformed Theology) that is usually labeled as “Calvinism” and a **denominational label** (Reformed Churches) that is applied to churches that are Presbyterian or teach reformed theology
- ❖ “**Reforming**” is often used to describe a rediscovery of biblical revelation that leads to repentance, realignment, and restoration of sound doctrine and sound living.

**1st Century Example:** *The Churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 1-3.*

**16th Century Example:** *The Churches of Europe during the "The Reformation."*

**20th Century Example:** *The Churches of the Southern Baptist Convention during the Conservative Resurgence.*

**21st Century Example:** Our lives and our church!

*The church is always in need of "being reformed" according to the Word of God and by the Spirit of God!*

## 2. In What Ways Are We Still Benefiting SPIRITUALLY from the Reformation?

- Do you enjoy congregational singing?
- Are glad you can own your own copy of the Bible?
- Do you like reading the Bible in your own language?
- Do you enjoy taking the Lord's Supper on a regular basis?
- Do you like being able to be 100% sure of your salvation before you die?
- Do you like being able to confess your sins directly to God without going through a priest and doing penance?
- Are you glad for a worship service conducted completely your own language?
- Are you thankful for a worship service centered on the preaching of God's Word rather than the dead rituals of men?
- Are you thankful that your pastors can marry and still be in good standing with God?
- Are you thankful for the separation of Church and State?
- Are you thankful for believer's baptism and being baptized on the right side of salvation?
- Are you glad every believer is declared as "saint" by God in Christ Jesus?
- Are you glad every believer can enter God's presence and come boldly to the throne of grace in prayer?
- Are you glad every believer can worship in God's presence anywhere and anytime without a priest or religious mediator?
- Are you thankful for the gospel of Jesus Christ clearly preached so you can by the authority of Scripture alone by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone be saved for the glory of God alone?

*If you answered "YES!" to these questions, then you have been directly impacted by the Reformation and we should give God all the glory as we thank Him for the men and women who 500 years ago took part in the Reformation that still impacts us today!*

## 3. Who Deserves THE GLORY for All of This?

*"I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And then, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer...the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all." – Martin Luther*

- ❖ If you would ask the any of the Reformers how this all happened they would answer with the "Five **SOLAS**", which is Latin for "**alone**" or "**only**"!
  - 1) It was done on the basis of "**SCRIPTURE** alone" (*Sola Scriptura*) and not their own authority, power, or wisdom!
  - 2) It was done by "**FAITH** alone" (*Sola Fide*) and not by their own good works.
  - 3) It was done in "**CHRIST** alone" (*Solus Christus*) and not any other human person or religious person.
  - 4) It was done by "**GRACE** alone" (*Sola Gratia*) and not due to their own human goodness or planning.
  - 5) It was done for "**GOD'S GLORY** alone" (*Soli Deo Gloria*) and not to glorify themselves or any human being.
- ❖ After all, Luther didn't mean to unleash all this on that fateful Wednesday! He as was just a very sincere Catholic monk trying to answer two of the most important **QUESTIONS** anyone could ask in any age:

***What must I do to be saved from God's wrath and enjoy a right relationship with Him?***

***Who has the ultimate authority to answer that question?***

## 4. People Are STILL ASKING These Questions Today.

- ❖ The answers to these 2 questions will determine your **DESTINY** for all eternity:

**CORRECT** answers will lead you into a burden-lifting, guilt-removing experience of God's forgiveness & eternal life

**WRONG** answers will lead you into a burden-bearing, guilt-ridden experience of God's judgment & eternal wrath!

- ❖ The Reformation was the result of a "**perfect storm**" of a variety of forces at work in the early 1500's and even the late 1400's – **political** forces, **economic** forces, **educational** forces, and **cultural** forces. But at the end of the day what drove Martin Luther on that Wednesday afternoon to hammer those 95 "points of debate" to the church door were these two all-important questions.

- ❖ Martin was a **GOOD** monk – one could even say he was one of the best Catholic monks in his day.

*"If ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I." - Martin Luther*

- ❖ Martin Luther's 95 "points of debate" were not 95 "gripes" created by a **DISGRUNTLED** church member on their way out the door or a revolutionary who was trying to overthrow the Roman Catholic Church!
- ❖ Luther chose October 31st to hammer his 95 "talking points" to the church door, because October 31st was "ALL SAINTS EVE" or "HALLOWS EVE" – what we now know as "**HALLOWEEN**"!

#### Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences Commonly Known as the 95 Theses

Out of love and concern for the truth, and with the object of eliciting it, the following heads will be the subject of a public discussion at Wittenberg under the presidency of the reverend father, Martin Luther, Augustinian, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and duly appointed Lecturer on these subjects in that place. He requests that whoever cannot be present personally to debate the matter orally will do so in absence in writing.

- Thesis #1** When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said "Repent", He called for the entire life of believers to be one of penitence.  
**Thesis #2** The word cannot be properly understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, i.e. confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
- Thesis #62** The true treasure of the church is the Holy gospel of the glory and the grace of God.
- Thesis #82** They ask, e.g.: Why does not the pope liberate everyone from purgatory for the sake of love (a most holy thing) and because of the supreme necessity of their souls? This would be morally the best of all reasons. Meanwhile he redeems innumerable souls for money, a most perishable thing, with which to build St. Peter's church, a very minor purpose.
- Thesis #86** Again: since the pope's income today is larger than that of the wealthiest of wealthy men, why does he not build this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of [penniless] believers?
- Thesis #88** Again: Surely a greater good could be done to the church if the pope were to bestow these remissions and dispensations, not once, as now, but a hundred times a day, for the benefit of any believer whatever.
- Thesis #90** These questions are serious matters of conscience to the laity. To suppress them by force alone, and not to refute them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christian people unhappy.
- Thesis #91** If therefore, indulgences were preached in accordance with the spirit and mind of the pope, all these difficulties would be easily overcome, and indeed, cease to exist.

- ❖ But what was written in Latin and meant for academic debate by the church hierarchy, was quickly **TRANSLATED** into common German and published using the new invention of the Gutenberg printing press.

## 5. The Reformation Is Worth Remembering and Celebrating Because God Used It to Bring His People **BACK TO THE BIBLE** for Answers to Life's Greatest Questions.

*Who or what is the standard of truth and the final authority in what God requires of us?*

*What must I do to be saved, stay saved, and be sure of my salvation?*

*Who do we need to go to in order to be saved by God?*

*Am I good enough to help God in saving me?*

*Why am I here and who deserves the credit for all of this?*

### The Five Solas of the Reformation Provide the Biblical Answer to These Questions!

By the authority of **Scripture alone**, we are saved through **faith alone** in **Christ alone**  
by **grace alone** for **God's glory alone!**

*And that is something worth remembering and celebrating every day,  
not just every 500 years!*

