

THE FIVE SOLAS

Talk 1: The Reformation

Introduction

How can I be right with God?

“We study the Reformation because of what we can learn. We learn of the treasure of the gospel. We learn how easy it can be for the church to lose sight of its value. We learn of the origin of most of the practices of church life that we simply take for granted. We learn what doctrines matter most. We learn how to proclaim those doctrines in the world in which we live. And we learn about real people, gifted and talented, who also possessed the flaws and limitations of humanity. Above all, we learn from them that our faith and trust lie not ultimately in their lives and their examples, but in the God-man, Jesus Christ. They all point us beyond themselves to him.”
- Stephen Nichols, *The Reformation*, p23

The Reformation across Europe

Germany

- Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

Switzerland

- Ulrich Zwingli (1484 – 1531)
- John Calvin (1509 – 1564)

Scotland

- John Knox (c.1513 – 1572)

Marks of a true church:

1. The preaching of the word
2. The administration of the sacraments – baptism and the Lord’s Supper
3. Church discipline

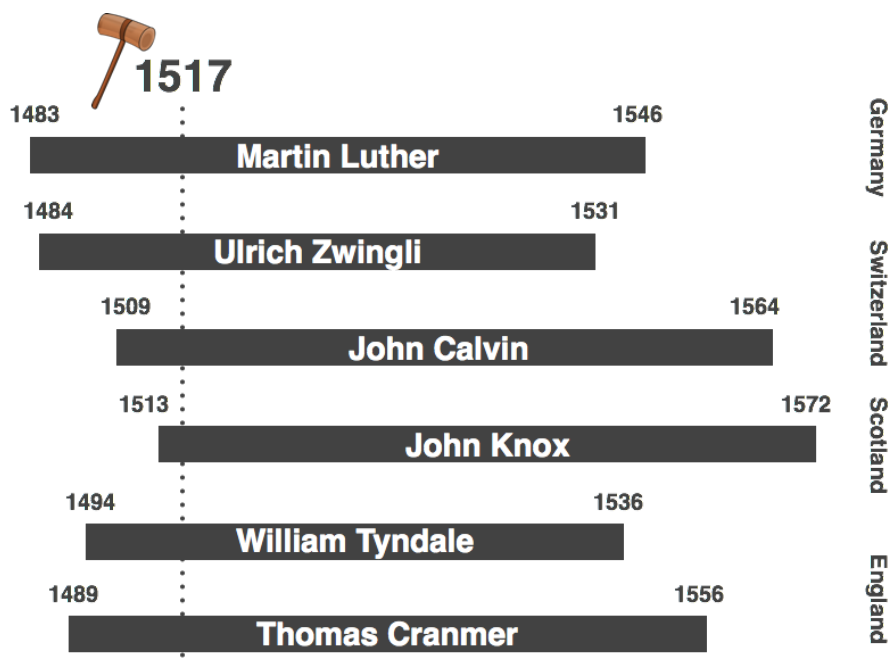
“His authority came from the conviction that preaching is God’s work, the message is his word, and he was sure the Holy Spirit would honour it.” - Iain Murray

England

- William Tyndale (c. 1494 – 1536)

“If God spare my life, before very long I shall cause a plough boy to know the scriptures better than you do!”

- Thomas Cranmer (1489 – 1556)



The Reformation: the recovery of the gospel

“Without the gospel everything is useless and vain; without the gospel we are not Christians; without the gospel all riches is poverty, all wisdom folly before God; strength is weakness, and all the justice of man is under the condemnation of God. But by the knowledge of the gospel we are made children of God, brothers of Jesus Christ, fellow townsmen with the saints, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, heirs of God with Jesus Christ, by whom the poor are made rich, the weak strong, the fools wise, the sinner justified, the desolate comforted, the doubting sure, and slaves free. It is the power of God for the salvation of all those who believe ...” – John Calvin, Preface to a French Translation of the NT

The Five Solas

1. **Scripture alone** ('Sola Scriptura')
2. **Christ alone** ('Solus Christus')
3. **Faith alone** ('Sola Fide')
4. **Grace alone** ('Sola Gratia')
5. **God's glory alone** ('Soli Deo Gloria')

“Almighty God, who through the preaching of thy servants, the blessed reformers, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine forth: Grant, we beseech thee, that knowing its saving power, we may faithfully guard and defend it against all enemies, and joyfully proclaim it, to the salvation of souls and the glory of thy Holy Name; through thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.” – Prayer for Reformation Day, Lutheran Service Book & Hymnal

Recommended Reading:

- **Nothing in my hands I bring**, *Ray Galea* [Ex-Catholic Galea describes the key theological differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism]
- **The Essence of the Reformation**, *Kirsten Birkett* [Excellent, short overview of the history]
- **The Reformation: 'How a monk and a mallet changed the world'**, *Stephen Nichols*
- **Five English Reformers**, *J.C. Ryle*