

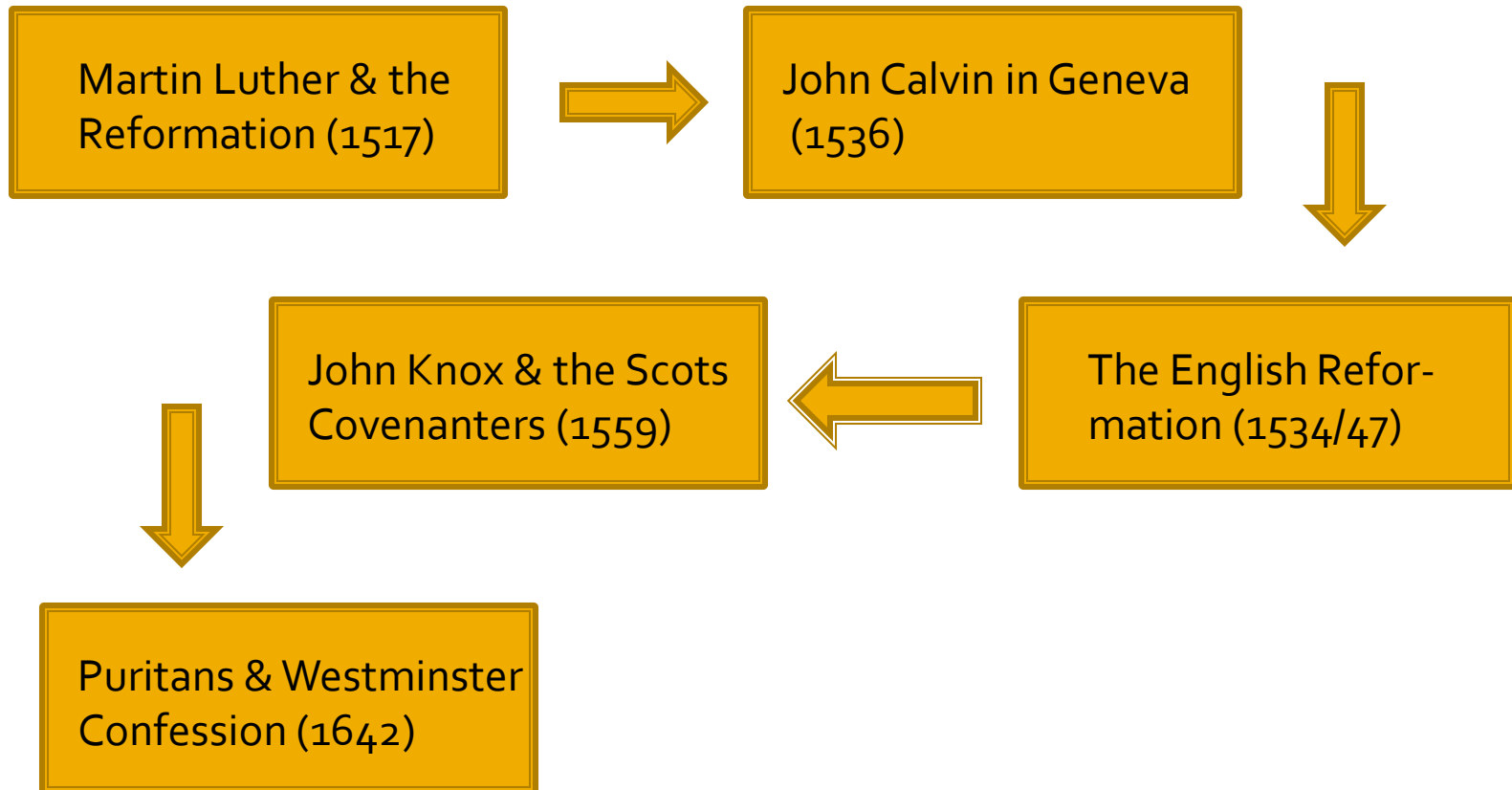
Second Presbyterian Church
Richard D. Phillips, Senior Minister

New Members' Class

Lesson #1: Solas of the Reformation

The Solas of the Protestant Reformation

- Our Reformation Lineage



The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone): the *Formal* Principle
 - The principle that gives form to the other beliefs
 - The Bible is the sole authority that binds the conscience of Christians and rules the Church.
 - Not just *Scripture*, but *Scripture alone*

"The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (WCF 1:10).
- Roman Catholic dual authority: Scripture and Tradition
- What about creeds and confessions?

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Some Bible Proofs for *sola scriptura*
 - But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Mat 22:29).
 - "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Eph 2:20).
 - "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mat 24:35).
 - "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa 55:10-11).

The Five Solas of the Reformation

■ Important Convictions about the Bible

■ Inspired

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2Tim. 3:16; cf 2 Pet. 1:21).

■ Inerrant

- “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps. 19:7; cf. Heb. 1:1).

■ Sufficient

- “that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2Ti 3:17).
- Sufficient for evangelism (1 Pet. 1:23), sanctification (Jn. 17:17), and Christian decision-making (Rom. 12:2).

■ Interpretation

- “Good and necessary consequences” (WCF 1:6)
- Perspicuity (WCF 1:7)
- Illumination of the Holy Spirit / role of prayer
- Due use of ordinary means
- Infallible rule of interpretation (Scripture interpreting Scripture).

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Sola Fide (Faith Alone): The *Material* Principle
 - Sinners are justified through faith alone, apart from works
- Luther's Desperate Plight and "Discovery" of the Gospel
 - The Way of "Monkery"
 - Relics and the treasury of saints
 - Mystical approaches
 - "Martin, just love God"
 - The Appeal to Scripture and Romans 1:17
- Why Reformation Day is Always Halloween

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Biblical Proof for “Faith Alone”
 - “we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Gal 2:16).
 - “he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:6).
 - “For in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ (Rom 1:17).
 - “It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith” (Rom 3:26-27).
- Rome vs. Reformation on works
 - Rome: Faith + Works = Justification
 - Reformation: Faith = Justification + Works
- What about James 2:18-24
 - “But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works... You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works... You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (Jam 2:18, 22, 24).
 - Paul: Faith = Justification + Works
 - James: Faith \neq Justification – Works. Faith proved by a justification that includes works.

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Not *by* but *through* faith (faith as instrument of justification)
- Imputation vs. Infusion
- Faith as God's gift
 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).
- Faith in Christ
 - "Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love" WCF XI.2

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- The Heart of the Gospel: Justification is
 - Through faith alone (*sola fide*)
 - By grace alone (*sola gratia*)
 - In Christ alone (*solus Christus*)
- Scripture Proofs
 - “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved... through faith” (Eph. 2:4-5, 8).
 - “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are *justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith*” (Rom. 3:23-25).

The Five Solas of the Reformation

■ Some Famous Quotes on Justification

- “Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable” (Thomas Watson: *A Body of Divinity*, p. 226).
- “The doctrine of Justification... is the principal ground on which religion must be supported, so it requires greater care and attention. For unless you understand first of all what your position is before God, and what the judgment (is) which he passes upon you, you have no foundation on which your salvation can be laid, or on which piety towards God can be reared. (John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (3.11.1).”
- “For the doctrine of justification by faith is like Atlas: it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace.... A right view of these things is not possible without a right understanding of justification; so that, when justification falls, all true knowledge of the grace of God in human life falls with it, and then, as Luther said, the church itself falls.” (J.I. Packer: “Introductory Essay,” in James Buchanon, *The Doctrine of Justification: An Outline of Its History in the Church and of Its Exposition from Scripture*, vii.).
- “The fruit of the gospel is justification by faith alone, which means this: ‘Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’ (Jn. 3:16). It does not postulate our doing anything, but simply believing in him -- ‘Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved’ (Acts 2:21)...You do not live a good life in order to get it. You live a good life in order to thank him for giving it. (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *Love So Amazing: Expositions of Colossians 1*, p. 103).”
- Feckenham: “Why, then it is necessary unto salvation to do good works also; it is not sufficient only to believe.” Lady Jane Grey: “I deny that, and I affirm that faith only saveth; but it is meet for a Christian to do good works, in token that he follows the steps of his Master, Christ, yet may we not say that they profit to our salvation; for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, and faith only in Christ’s blood saves us.” (Paul F.M. Zahl, *Five Women of the English Reformation*, 110).

The Five Solas of the Reformation

- Soli Deo Gloria (*to God alone be glory*)
 - “The proper study of God’s elect is God” (Charles Spurgeon).
 - “Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God” (Jn. 17:3).
 - “A grasp of the first four *solas* leads naturally to *soli Deo gloria*; a loss of a concern for God’s glory undermines and eventually casts off the other *solas*.” (James M. Boice).
 - “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever” (WSC 1).

The Five Solas of the Reformation

■ Paul's *solī Deo gloria* Doxology

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:33-36)

■ Creation: from – through –to God

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps. 19:1).

■ Salvation: from – through – to God

- Salvation is *from* God, for he has planned it all. Salvation is *through* God, for he achieved it through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is *to* God, as he gains a people for His own possession and glory.

■ Glory to God vs. Glory to God *alone*

"to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph. 1:6).