The Five Solas of the Reformation

Introduction.

A. November 1 (All Saints Day).
   1. Roman Catholic commemoration of the saints.
      a. The Church triumphant (in heaven).
      b. The Church militant (on earth).
   2. Protestant traditions remember all Christians who have died.
   3. Also called All Hallows Day.

B. Before the Reformation.
   1. Confession of sin on the eve of All Hallows Day.
   2. View the relics of the saints.
   3. Reduction of time in Purgatory.
      a. In 1517, Frederick the Wise had 19,013 relics.
      b. Would give 1,902,202 years and 270 days off Purgatory.
   4. Dress as demons to scare away demons from hell.

C. Purgatory.
   1. Where the souls of the believers were purged of sins committed after baptism.
   2. Could be shortened by a pious life or by the pious acts of the living on one's behalf.
   3. Justification for Purgatory in 1 Maccabees 12:39-46.

D. Reformation: "the period of religious reform in the 16th century that affected every aspect of life: religion, art, science, government, etc."

E. Protestant: those who protested the abuses of the Catholic church.

F. We should know church history because our roots are there.

I. Europe before the Reformation.

A. Spiritual fear.
   1. The judgment of God.
   2. The judgment of the Church.
   3. Inhabitants of hell trying to lure the unwary into sin.

B. A corrupt Church.
   1. The Church was broke.
   2. Tried to raise money by every device.
      a. Simony – the selling of church offices.
      b. Indulgences (ex. Albert of Hohenzollern).

C. Indulgences.
   1. Began in the Crusades.
   2. Based on the theory of the superfluous merits of the saints.
   3. Not sold, but "given," usually in exchange for money or service.

D. Church became extraordinarily wealthy.
E. The Popes from 1458 -1521.
    1. Pius II – careless and self-indulgent.
    2. Sixtus IV – intent on exalting himself and family.
    3. Innocent VIII – gave his 7 illegitimate children church offices.
    4. Alexander IV – lived in open adultery; with his two illegitimate children Lucretia and Cesar Borgia, committed "unspeakable" crimes.
    5. Julius II – called the Fifth Lateran Council to discuss reforms but the "warrior pope" spent most of his papacy at war.
    6. Leo X – loved pageants and gambling.
        a. Dissolved the Fifth Lateran Council.
        b. "Let us enjoy the Papacy, since God has given it to us."
F. Three ways of salvation offered by the Church.
    1. Self-help (to receive the merits of the saints).
        a. Sacraments.
        b. Works of mercy.
        c. Intercessors.
        d. Monasticism.
    2. Sacrament of penance.
        a. Contrition.
        b. Confession.
        c. Satisfaction.
    3. Mysticism.
        a. Become engulfed in God as a drop in an ocean.
        b. One condition – love God.

II. <u>Martin Luther (1483 – 1546).</u>
A. Crisis.
    1. Raised in the spiritual fear of his time.
    2. Law student at University of Erfurt.
    3. Thunderstorm 2 July 1505.
        a. "St. Anne, help me. I will become a monk."
        b. Entered Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.

B. Terror.
    1. Self -help.
        a. All one did was only what one ought to do anyway.
        b. Therefore, impossible to store up merits.
    2. Penance.
        a. Could not know if one was sorry enough.
        b. Could not know if one had confessed everything.
    3. Mysticism.
        a. Man is a rebel, breaking God's law, defying his majesty, and hiding from him.
        b. God is unlovable: "Love him? I do not love him. I hate him."

C. Conversion.
    1. Was named to the chair of Biblical studies at University of Wittenberg, along with getting his doctorate and preaching.
    2. Teaching Psalm 22 – the Cry of Dereliction.
        a. Forsaken, abandoned, alienated and estranged from God.
        b. Yet Christ was pure and sinless.
        c. Forsaken because he bore our sins.
    3. Private devotions in Romans.
        a. The just shall live by faith (1:17; also Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38 from Hab. 2:4).
        b. The God of majesty is also the God of compassion.

D. Reform.
    1. Pope Leo X raising money to build St. Peter's Basilica.
        a. Authorized the selling of indulgences – half to the pope and half to the prince.
        b. Johann Tetzel: the moment the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from Purgatory springs.
    2. Angered by the failure of reform, Luther posted the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517.
        a. Written in Latin (not meant for the public).
        b. Matters to be discussed by the Church proposing reforms.
        c. Purgatory.
            1) If the pope had power to release a soul from Purgatory at all, then he should release all from Purgatory.
            2) The doctrine of Purgatory found in a book not even in the Bible.
        d. Translated into German, printed, and spread throughout Germany – lit the fires of Reformation.

E. The break with Rome.
    1. Denied the infallibility of Pope and councils.
    2. Repudiated Canon Law (the authority of the Church).
    3. Identified the papacy with the Antichrist.
    4. Denied five of the seven sacraments.
    5. Declared the priesthood of all believers.
    6. Denied the sacrifice in the Mass.
    7. Faced the Holy Roman Emperor at the Diet of Worms.
        a. The assembly of the estates of the Empire.
        b. Commanded to recant his teachings.

(Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other.)

    8. Placed under the ban of the Empire.
    9. Excommunicated.

III. <u>Core issues.</u>

A. Authority.
    1. The Roman Church: Scripture, the Church through its popes and councils, and tradition.
    2. The Reformers: Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone.

B. Salvation.
    1. The Roman Church: Baptism, penance, works, Purgatory.
    2. The Reformers: Through the righteousness that comes freely from God through faith in the finished work of Christ.
        a. Sola fidei – by faith ALONE.
        b. In solo Christo – in Christ ALONE.
        c. Sola gratia – by grace ALONE.
        d. Sola Scriptura – by the Scripture ALONE.
        e. Soli Deo gloria – to the glory of God ALONE.

IV. <u>Today.</u>

A. We celebrate 509 years since that day.

B. We stand in that long line of history.

C. Although many who call themselves Christians no longer hold to these "Solas," we must continue to stand in the gap (Ez. 22:30).

D. Every year at Halloween, let's remember what it really is.