

Statement of Faith

This Declaration of Faith is based upon our understanding of the teaching and commands of the Holy Bible.

The Bible

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. We believe the 66 canonical books of the Old and New Testaments were inspired by God. God the Holy Spirit moved in and through the human authors to select the very words and to produce the entire text, while at the same time preserving the individual style of each human author (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21*).

We believe the Bible is God's completed revelation and that the original manuscripts were free from error. The Bible is wholly true, accurate, and trustworthy, and is the supreme and final authority in all matters. We believe an accurate understanding of the Bible is arrived at through a literal, historical, grammatical and contextual interpretive process (*1 Corinthians 2:1-13*).

The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and each having the same attributes and perfections (*Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*).

We affirm an orthodox view of the living God who possesses an exhaustive foreknowledge of all things potential, as well as all things actual, and that there is nothing God does not know, past, present, or future (*Job 37:16; Psalm 139:4, 16; Isaiah 40:12-14, 42:9, 46:10*).

God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. In His very essence (*Genesis 1:1; John 4:24; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13*), God is self-existent, eternal and unchanging (*Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 90:2; Psalm 119:137*). He is the Creator of all things (*Genesis 1:1; Ephesians 3:9; Revelation 4:11*) and the absolute sovereign and omnipotent ruler of all creation (*Psalm 103:19*).

Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, having existed eternally, became man without ceasing to be God in an indivisible oneness, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God, redeem sinful man, and rule over God's kingdom (*John 1:1-2; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 9:6-7*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in Him is assured by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (*Romans 3:24-25, 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2:24; 2 Peter 2:1*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (*Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:24, 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2*).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator between men and God (1 Timothy 2:5) and that He alone is the Head of His body, the Church (*Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15, 5:23; Colossians 1:18*).

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ at the moment of conversion, indwelling and sealing them unto the Day of Redemption (*John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14*).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher Who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they wrote God's revelation, the Bible (*2 Peter 1:19-21*), and that He continues to guide believers in all truth as they read and understand His written revelation. Further, we believe that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (*John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18*).

We believe that the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by affecting His purpose of redeeming and transforming people into His image (*John 16:14; Acts 1:8*).

We believe that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow but manifests Himself in unique ways at different times for the purpose of validating specific messages or certain people such as the apostles and prophets. Therefore some gifts and miraculous activity were meant to be foundational to the establishing of the Church and are not normative in the life of the church at the present time even though God can and still does perform miracles, sometimes using His people as means, as determined by His sovereign will.

We also believe that the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all spiritual gifts and that all abiding gifts are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:3-4; John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15; James 5:15*).

Humanity

We believe God directly created the first man and first woman, Adam and Eve, in His own image and free from sin. God created human beings as immortal, rational, and morally

responsible individuals. Humanity has been given the purpose to glorify God, enjoy His fellowship and accomplish His will on earth (*Genesis 1:26-31; 2:7; Matthew 19:4*).

We believe Adam sinned, and as a result, all people are sinners by nature and choice, and are spiritually dead in their relationship to God. Because sin is rooted in the core of their being, they are totally incapable of being reconciled to God apart from divine grace (*Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-10*).

We believe Adam sinned, and as a result, all people are sinners by nature and choice, and are spiritually dead in their relationship to God. Because sin is rooted in the core of their being, they are totally incapable of being reconciled to God apart from divine grace (*John 14:1-6; Romans 1:16-17; Titus 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*).

We believe all people stand in need of the Savior, who alone can address their spiritually dead condition. We believe those who repent of sin and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and reconciled to God. We believe genuine saving faith should, and will, be evidenced by a life of faith expressed through obedience to the Word and righteous living, good works, genuine love and proper social concern (*John 14:1-6; Romans 1:16-17; Titus 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*).

We believe in the sanctity of human life (*Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-15*), which has value in God's sight from the beginning, at conception, until death, when our spirit returns to God who gave it (*Psalm 51; Ecclesiastes 12:7*).

Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (*Ephesians 2:8-10, 1:7; John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19*).

We believe that before the foundation of the world God freely and graciously chose those individuals whom He would save. He did this based upon His own sovereign choice and not based upon any foresight or anticipation of an individual's decision. The grace of God

encompasses the gift of salvation and the means of receiving the gift. All and only those whom the Father draws will come in faith, and all and only those who come in faith will be received by the Father (*Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-2; John 6:37, 40, 44; Acts 13:48*).

We believe that God's sovereign choice does not contradict or negate man's responsibility for his actions in any way. Man is completely responsible for his decisions and should be honestly called upon to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (*John 3:18-19, 36, 5:40; Acts 2:38-39; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Psalm 62:12; Romans 2:5-6; Revelation 20:13*).

We believe that justification is an act of God whereby He declares righteous those who have faith in Christ alone. This righteousness is completely independent of any virtue, merit, or good work of man, but is based upon faith alone. Justification involves both an imputation of the believer's sin to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer. In this way Paul can say that God is both "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (*Romans 3:20; 4:6; 8:33, 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26*).

The Preservation and Assurance of Believers

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (*John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5*).

Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore both declared holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous, and does not speak to righteous acts or character in the life of a believer (*Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2*).

We believe that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, there is also a progressive sanctification by which the believer's character and lifestyle are brought in line with the

standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (*John 17:17,19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 4; 5:23*).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. (*Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14 16; 1 John 3:5-9*).

We believe, because of the undeserved grace of God which has resulted in our positional and progressive sanctification, all the saved should live in such a manner as to bring glory and not reproach upon their Savior and Lord. (*2 Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2, 14:13; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:11*).

The Standard for Sexuality

We believe that God has instituted the marriage union, made up of one man and one woman, and that any intimate sexual activity outside of that union is sin. We believe that any form of homosexual or lesbian practices, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's holy standard (*Genesis 2:24, 19:5-13; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4*).

The Church

We believe in the Universal Church, the spiritual body of Christ of which He is the head. We believe the Church began on the Day of Pentecost and is comprised of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (*Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 27, Romans 12:4-5, Acts 2*).

We believe the body of Christ is expressed in local churches whose members have been baptized upon a credible confession of faith and have associated themselves for worship, instruction, evangelism, and service. Each believer has equal access to God and the responsibility to offer up sacrifices, including self, praise, and possessions (***1 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:2, 1 Peter 2:5***).

We believe there are two ordinances for the local church: believer's baptism by immersion following conversion, and the Lord's Supper (***Matthew 28:19, Acts 19:3-5, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26***).

We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial to the death of Jesus Christ. The elements of the Lord's Supper are symbols. There is no real presence of Christ in them, nor is a unique act of grace received through participation (***1 Corinthians 11:24-25***).

We believe in the autonomy of each local church, while recognizing the value of cooperation and interdependency. The leadership of the church is responsible and accountable first to Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd, then to the congregation, as servants, overseeing in love and humility. We believe only biblically qualified men are to serve in the position of Pastor or Elder (***Romans 15:25-27, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-7***).

We believe that women and men are created equal in the sight of God: equal image bearers, equally sinful, equally responsible to God, equally redeemable, and equal in Christ. Nevertheless, we understand from Scripture that God created each gender with functional differences: for example, a husband is designated by God to be the spiritual leader of his family, while also eagerly encouraging the necessary and desirable spiritual involvement of his wife in his life and the life of their family. Similarly, men alone are designated by God to be Elders (Pastors) in God's church, while also eagerly encouraging the necessary and desirable spiritual involvement of women in the ministry of the church. Scripture teaches that men and women are spiritually equal in every sense, that both men and women are given spiritual gifts that are a vital part of the ministry of the local church, but that women are not permitted to teach or exercise spiritual authority over men in the local church. Therefore we are dedicated to empowering men and women to exercise their spiritual gifts so that they flourish in the ministry of the church, while maintaining the role distinctions given in scripture by maintaining male eldership in title and function (***Genesis 1:26; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:9-12; Titus 2:3-5***).

We believe that it is the joyful obligation and privilege of all the saved to witness, by life and by word, the truths of Holy Scripture, seeking to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind and to baptize and teach all converts through the local church. As members of the global Church, we believe that it is our responsibility to partner with other local churches throughout the world in order to build up the Church where it may be weak, come alongside the Church where our gifts or resources may be of benefit, and help to establish the local church where it does not already exist (*Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Romans 12:4-8*).

The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the original Fall, that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (*Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11, 25:41; Revelation 20:10*).

Last Things

We believe a person's eternal destiny is forever sealed by his or her acceptance or rejection, in this lifetime, of Christ and His work on the cross. Believers will experience eternity in the presence of God in Heaven. Unbelievers will be in Hell, a place of suffering and loss, eternally separated from the presence of God (*Luke 16:19-31; John 3:16, 14:1-3; Matthew 10:28*).

We believe in the personal return of Jesus Christ for His Church and in the pre-millennial coming of Jesus Christ to the earth with His saints to establish His kingdom on earth. After this, Christ will establish his eternal kingdom, where believers will live with Him forever (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:1-2, 21:1-4*).