



What We Believe

The Triune God

We believe that there is one God who eternally exists in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In this “Trinity” God exists in perfect relationship within himself. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet we affirm each as God in one Being. Each has precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections and each are equally worthy of the same honor, faith and obedience.

Jesus Christ (God the Son)

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, the pre-existent Word, the image bearer of God in human flesh. He was always with God and is God. Through Jesus all things were created, came into being and have their being. In fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus came to redeem sinful man and to restore him to right relationship to God. He alone as Savior is mediator between God and man. He was supernaturally conceived by the Spirit of God and born of the Virgin Mary. Though he came in human flesh, we believe he did not cease to be God, though he voluntarily limited himself by taking on the form of a servant, making himself nothing as he was born in the likeness of men.

Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life. In his infinite love for the lost, Jesus died as the perfect, spotless sacrifice, shedding his blood on a Roman cross for the sins of the world. At the cross, Jesus died in our place as a substitute – the just for the unjust. There both divine mercy and justice were on display as the wrath of the Father was poured out on the Son as Jesus attained salvation for man. We believe that, according to the Scriptures, on the third day

Jesus bodily rose from the grave, defeating death, sin and the powers of darkness. He ascended to the Father and is now seated at his right hand. Jesus, as our forerunner, has gone before us in life, death and resurrection. We believe that Jesus is alive. He is sovereign over all things and is Head of his bride, the Church. As our High Priest, he now lives to intercede for us. He alone is the source of our life, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Thus, Jesus is worthy of our praise, adoration, affections, devotion and obedience. He is Lord. Finally, we believe in the future physical, bodily return of Jesus Christ and the final consummation of all things, as all of creation will be subjected to his rule and reign.

The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, though eternally existent from before creation and present throughout the Old Testament, manifested himself in a unique manner at Pentecost. According to Scripture, we believe that he regenerates, indwells *and* seals each and every believer at the moment of belief upon Jesus Christ for salvation. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the believer is baptized into the body of Christ, the Church. We believe it is only through the Holy Spirit that the Church is led into a right understanding and application of Scripture. Thus, the Holy Spirit is meant to guide the believer, revealing the mind and will of God, leading the believer to be transformed into the image of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the believer’s only source of power for transformation, for mission and service. He desires to continually fill each believer, and he readily imparts his supernatural gifts for the building up of the Church and the

mission of the gospel worldwide. We heartily affirm that the role of the Holy Spirit is to point the world to Jesus, to glorify the Son. In doing so, the Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and leads men to repentance and to confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. Finally, we believe the Holy Spirit is to be honored, obeyed and worshipped as God.

Scripture

We believe that both the Old and New Testament (66 books) are given by the inspiration of God. We understand that men were set apart by God and moved by the Holy Spirit to write the words of Scripture. This divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of Scripture – as appeared in the original manuscripts. We also affirm that all of Scripture as originally given is without error. Scripture is God’s gracious self-revelation to man. It leads us to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thus, we believe that Jesus is the main character of the Bible; furthermore, we affirm that no portion of Scripture (Old Testament included) is properly read or understood until it leads to him. Finally, we believe that Scripture is authoritative over the life of the believer. God’s Word is meant to guide all aspects of our living. We may not add, subtract or seek to change the plain literal, grammatical, historical meaning of the text.

Man

We believe that God created man – male and female – to be his unique image bearers so that man might glorify God by living in perfect relationship with him. According to Scripture, we believe that after being tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God, willfully sinned and permanently tarnished his ability to perfectly image forth God. With the introduction of sin came death, both physical and spiritual. There is now enmity

between God and man. In his natural state, man’s default is one of unbelief and rebellion. Man has now become subject to God’s divine wrath, becoming totally depraved and incapable of being made right with God apart from God’s miraculous grace. We believe that this pervasive depravity has been transmitted to the entire human race (with the exception of Christ) and that each individual is born with a sinful nature. We believe, according to Scripture, that Satan has been given by God dominion over fallen man. Without God’s intervention, man has no hope of salvation.

Salvation

We believe that Jesus is the gospel. He is the embodiment of the “good news.” We affirm that the gospel is not about attaining God’s favor through our good works, self-effort, prayer, best intentions or any human means. The gospel is Christ crucified in the place of the sinner, Christ raised in power and Christ the King, Lord over all creation. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. He is the only source of righteousness and salvation for man. He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf, so that in Christ, we might become the righteousness of God. We believe that man is saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a free gift of God. We believe that the proper response to the gospel is belief in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Authentic faith will be accompanied by repentance of sin and a changed life. Furthermore, a disciple of Jesus will be compelled to follow Jesus, he will be continually transformed by Jesus and committed to the mission of Jesus. Finally, we believe that man’s response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the unconditional election of God for his own glory and purpose.

Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which entails the believer being transformed by the renewing of his mind and being conformed to the image of Christ, is initiated by and is primarily a work of the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer. He is the active agent, empowering us to be set apart, producing fruit and living on mission with God. We believe that every believer is positioned in the righteousness of Christ before God; however, every individual believer has the responsibility to appropriate daily the finished work of Christ to his life. We do not believe in sinless perfection. For the believer the penalty and power of sin have been removed, but the presence of sin still remains in this current age. We believe that all believers are called to grow in grace and to be changed by the Spirit of God as they live in surrender and submission to his leading. The believer is called to persevere in the faith, knowing that he will give an account to God for all that is not ultimately wrought in Christ. The believer grows through biblical community, through fervent study and application of God's Word, through prayer, worship, regular confession and accountability. Ultimately though, the believer's confidence, even in sanctification, is not steeped in his ability to persevere but rather in the promises of God to guard that which he is entrusted until the day of Christ. Finally, we believe in the final and complete sanctification of the believer at the return of Jesus when we will see the Lord and be "like him."

The Church

We believe that the Church is the universal, spiritual Body and Bride of Christ. It is comprised of those who have been redeemed by Jesus and regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God. We believe that the Church began at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit came and indwelled the first followers of Jesus. We believe that the Church, albeit

imperfect, is the instrument through which God accomplishes his mission of saving and setting apart men. We believe that the Church exists to glorify God by serving him faithfully in the mission of making disciples on the earth. As churches are planted, disciples are reproduced and lives are changed, communities are transformed from the inside out as the power of the gospel impacts all facets of living. We believe that every believer is called to be part of a local church body, as we were created to live and serve and exercise our gifts in biblical community. As members of the Church, according to Scripture, we are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to sacrificially love one another with a pure heart and to fervently serve one another as we put the needs of others ahead of our own. We affirm that Jesus instituted two sacraments in the New Testament that the Church today should embrace and practice: Baptism and Communion (the Lord's Supper).

The Consummation

We believe in and eagerly await the future, bodily, visible, glorious return of Jesus. We believe that when he returns, the dead will be physically resurrected, those alive in Christ will be transformed and both the just and unjust will be judged (in Christ) as his kingdom is finally consummated, ushering in the eternal state. Satan and all the powers of darkness will be eternally punished and separated from the presence of God. According to Scripture, we believe that there will be a new heaven and new earth, and Jesus will reign as king, fulfilling all Old and New Testament prophecies as the Messiah, the Lamb now become Lion of Judah. We believe that the righteous, in imperishable resurrection bodies, will live with Jesus forever, serving, worshipping and reigning with him in glory.