

## Session 1: What is the Gospel?

**Definition:** gospel (*euangelion*) – Good news

The gospel is generally referred to as the good news about Christ. It is the proclamation that Christ has fully upheld the demands of the law, offered himself as the satisfaction of God's wrath due sin and has taken away our sin through his death upon the cross in our place and his subsequent resurrection conquering sin, death, and the grave.

According to the Apostle Paul, the simplest view of the gospel is *“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures”* (**1 Corinthians 15:3–4**).

The gospel declares that salvation is freely granted to all who repent of sin and believe this good news by faith. It is by faith alone, made possible by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8–9) that a sinner is justified (declared righteous, **Romans 3:21–31**) before the Creator of the universe. This righteousness is not infused but imputed (**Romans 4:22**, credited) to the repenting sinner. It is not a righteousness of one's own but rather an alien righteousness derived from the perfect work of Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

The gospel message is simple but not simplistic. It does not begin with the NT but is the subject of the entirety of Scripture. The gospel message is the aim of God's revelation to man from beginning to end (Genesis–Revelation). It is in this grand narrative of Scripture that we come to know and understand the full mission of God. We must, therefore, begin our understanding of the gospel where God begins His revelation (**Genesis**).

### **A Concise Definition:**

*“. . . the good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God”<sup>1</sup>*

*“The story of the Bible is the narrative of God coming to be with his people as their Lord, in his control, authority, and presence. After creation and fall, the story is about redemption, and thus about Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>*

### ***In the beginning God . . .***

The Bible begins by clearly declaring that God is the initiator and creator of all that exists. His creative authority reveals his ruling authority over cosmic bodies (the heavens) and all that makes life possible here on the earth; the trees, grass, birds, animals, fish, and even all of humanity.

At the peak of creation, in his “finest hour;” God created the human race.

*“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

*And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.””*

(Genesis 1:26–28 ESV)

The attention of Scripture then turns to this human race. Chapter 2 zooms in on this significant creation of God. We are informed of a special place which God prepares for his special creation, a garden in the east of Eden. Scripture reveals that this garden is a place where God’s people (Adam & Eve) live in special relationship with him as he promises to provide for their every need.

### ***Sin enters . . .***

▪ But . . . rather than being fruitful and multiplying in order to fill the earth with an increasing race of worshippers; Adam and Eve seek to provide for themselves by going beyond the boundaries God had established and trusting in their own way.

- The subsequent result was exactly what God had warned them about. They were separated from their creator (cast out of his special place) and began dying physically. Numerous other consequences follow as a result of sin's entrance to this world. Even nature itself was subjected to sin's affects.

### ***Grace abounds . . .***

- Yet, God revealed an immense nature of mercy and grace by still providing for his special creation. He promised that the serpent's head would be crushed by the seed of the woman:

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*  
(Genesis 3:15 ESV)

- He then provide for man and woman's nakedness by covering them with the skin of an animal.
- The story of Genesis continues to more fully paint this picture of sin's affects on God's creation and God's amazing grace in the midst.
- Adam and Eve's son Cain grows jealous and murders his brother Abel.
- The descendants of Adam and Eve all face death (with the exception of Enoch) which was a curse due to sin.

### ***Sin continues to spread . . .***

- Eventually sinfulness grows so pervasive that God himself desires to wipe out all humanity and rid this world of sin once and for all:

*"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."*  
(Genesis 6:5-7 ESV)

### ***Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds (Rom. 5:20) . . .***

- Despite God's intention to meet out justice upon all humanity, he exercised grace in the midst and chose to preserve Noah and his family (though sinners deserving God's wrath):

*"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."  
(Genesis 6:8 ESV)*

- God graciously preserved this family through his wrath poured out in the flood. The result, however, was the continuation of sin in this world.
- Noah was commanded to serve as a new Adam and be fruitful and fill the earth.

***Let's make a name . . .***

- Humanity, however, sought to remain solidified and make a name for themselves above any other name.
- They attempted to construct a tower that would gain them a place above God so God responded (in grace) by confounding their languages and forcing them to fulfill his desire for them to fill the earth.

*"Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.' And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.'" So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."  
(Genesis 11:4-8 ESV)*

***A new beginning . . .***

- Through Noah's descendants, God graciously chose one man through whom he would bring about all his gracious promises to the world, restoring all things to the way they were intended to be.
- God chose a man by the name of Abraham to be the father of his special people who would be led to dwell once again in a place prepared for them by their Creator.

*"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will*

*be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*  
(Genesis 12:1–3 ESV)

- Because of God’s amazing grace, Abraham believed God and was justified (declared righteous).
- Abraham’s descendants would be the people of God who would uniquely display his glory to the nations so that all nations would find blessing.
- Through miraculous events against all odds, God proved himself faithful and capable of carrying out his promises.
- Abraham produced descendants who ultimately, by God’s providential grace, found themselves in Egypt. Here they eventually became slaves for 400 years in order for God to powerfully deliver them revealing his great name.

*“Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”*  
(Genesis 15:13–16 ESV)

*“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.”*  
(Exodus 1:8–12 ESV)

- God led his people out with a mighty hand in order to lead them to the land he had prepared for them. He gave them his law establishing God’s rule over his people.

- Sin's effects, however, upon the hearts of humanity resulted in continual rebellion towards the Creator inviting God's judgment and requiring God's grace for humanity to continue.
- God's people eventually did enter the land which God had prepared, but they never fully obeyed and never fully realized all that God's promises held for his people.

### ***Judges – a cycle of sin . . .***

- The book of Judges illustrates the continuous cycle of sin that God's people went through. They grew complacent under God's blessing, rebelled, were judged, cried out to God, and were delivered. The cycle would then start over.
- Throughout this period one truth seems to stand out . . .

*"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."  
(Judges 17:6 ESV)*

### ***God's rule through God's king . . .***

- God's people began to demand a king over them like all the other nations.
- God had promised a king through the prophet Moses,

*""When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother."  
(Deuteronomy 17:14–15 ESV)*

- God's people, however, chose a king instead of God rather than a king under God. This led to the people's choice, Saul. Saul was anointed king and eventually forfeited his kingship by rebellion against God.
- God led the judge Samuel to anoint David as king instead of Saul. David served as a picture of the ultimate king that would rule on the throne forever.
- The well known story of David and Goliath serves as a paradigm for the

coming Messiah who would deliver his people from spiritual bondage and establish an eternal kingdom.

In this story, David serves as the anointed king who has yet to ascend the throne yet goes against the enemy of God's people while the people of God stand off in the distance unwilling and unable to gain the victory for themselves. David, though historical, serves as a type of Christ foreshadowing what Christ would accomplish.

- Under the reign of David and Solomon God's people experience in part the kingdom of God. They are living as God's special people in the land that God had prepared for them with God's king ruling over them.
- This reality was only a shadow of what was to come and was short lived. Yet, God renewed his promise to his people through David,

*"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."*

(2 Samuel 7:12-13 ESV)

- This promise is the promise to Abraham renewed and points to a king who would rule forever – Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1).

### ***Sin still reigns . . .***

- After the reign of Solomon, the kingdom was divided (see Gen. 11). God's people continued to live in rebellion and chase after other God's so God's judgment came upon them once again.
- The prophets spoke messages of warning and repentance but the people would not hear and obey. In his justice, God sent judgment upon his people removing them from the place he had prepared for them. Like Adam, they were exiled from God's special place.
- In the midst of judgment, God spoke words of hope and promise. He would remain faithful even though his people would not. He told them of a day when he would write his law upon their hearts so that they would follow him,

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*  
(Jeremiah 31:31–34 ESV)

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord GOD; let that be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel.

*“Thus says the Lord GOD: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt. And the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I*

*have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.”*  
(Ezekiel 36:22–36 ESV)

- God later restored his people to the land by his grace but the return was not all that was expected. It still fell short of the promises. And as usual, God’s people continued to live in rebellion. God once again sent judgment upon his people that they might wake up and see their plight. This time the judgment was a famine of his word. God ceased speaking to his people through the prophets for 400 years.

*“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it.”*  
(Amos 8:11–12 ESV)

### ***The Word of God . . .***

- After a long period of silence, God spoke! This time in a more profound way,

*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”*  
(Hebrews 1:1–4 ESV)

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*  
(John 1:1, 14 ESV)

- By his works, Jesus revealed the undoing of the effects of sin. He caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, etc.

*"The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.""*  
(Luke 7:18–23 ESV)

- By his sinlessness, he fulfill the demands of the law making him the perfect representative of humanity. Where Adam and Israel failed, Christ prevailed.

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."*  
(Matthew 5:17–19 ESV)

- Having lived a perfect, sinless life; Christ offered himself as the sacrifice for the sins of, not just Israel, but of the world. Upon the cross he fully satisfied the just wrath of God due sinners and provided forgiveness of sins.

*"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 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. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 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."*  
(Romans 3:21–26 ESV)

- By his resurrection, he proved God's approval and conquered sin, death, and the grave. The serpent's head was crushed.

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"*  
(1 Peter 1:3 ESV)

*"When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"*

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."  
(1 Corinthians 15:54–57 ESV)

- All who repent of sin and believe the good news about Christ experience God's gracious gift of salvation, freedom from God's wrath, the forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation with our Creator.

*"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*  
(Acts 2:37–38 ESV)

*"Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,"*  
(Acts 3:19 ESV)

*"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,"*  
(Acts 17:30 ESV)

*"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.""*  
(Romans 10:9–11 ESV)

- Today, God's people (the Church) continue to proclaim this message as the means of God restoring his kingdom in all its fullness until the day when he returns and fully and finally eradicates sin and makes all things as they were originally intended. This includes the redemption of all creation as well as the bodies of all believers.

## Session 2: Who is the Church?

### Ways We Often Cheapen The Church...

In our independence, we ignore the church.

In our pragmatism, we pollute the church.

In our missions, we minimize the church.

We elevate our traditions over God's truth.

We value our preferences over God's priorities.

We practically define the church according to our personal comforts.

(David Platt, Secret Church)

### Definition of the Church:

The church is the body of people called by God's grace through faith in Christ to glorify him by serving him in this world.

The body of people...

- The church is a gathering.

*Ekklesia*: Mentioned 114 times in the New Testament.

**Twice it refers to an Old Testament assembly.**

*This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.*

*(Acts 7:38 ESV)*

*"I will tell of your name to my brothers;  
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."*

*(Hebrews 2:12 ESV)*

**Three times it refers to a secular assembly.**

*Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.*

*(Acts 19:32 ESV)*

*But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly.*

*(Acts 19:39 ESV)*

*And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.  
(Acts 19:41 ESV)*

**109 times it refers to a Christian assembly.**

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus,  
called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the  
name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:  
(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)*

*Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your  
steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you  
are enduring.  
(2 Thessalonians 1:4 ESV)*

▪ **Those whom God has called out.**

*...including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,  
To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
(Romans 1:6-7 ESV)*

▪ **Those whom God has called together.**

*...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one  
of another.  
(Romans 12:5 ESV)*

*If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all  
rejoice together.  
(1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV)*

▪ **The church is an earthly assembly with a heavenly destiny.**

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the  
heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to  
the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the  
judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus,  
the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a  
better word than the blood of Abel.  
(Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV)*

- **The church is people.**

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

*(1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV)*

*As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"*

*(Romans 9:25-26 ESV)*

- **The church is a family.**

We are sons and daughters.

*...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

*(Galatians 3:26 ESV)*

*"Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."*

*(2 Corinthians 6:17-18 ESV)*

We are brothers and sisters.

*Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

*(1 Timothy 5:1-2 ESV)*

*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*

*Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

*(1 John 3:14-18 ESV)*

- **The church is a bride.**

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.*

*(Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV)*

*For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present*

*you as a pure virgin to Christ.*

*(2 Corinthians 11:2 ESV)*

- **The church is a building.**

*For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.*

*(1 Corinthians 3:9 ESV)*

- **The church is a house.**

*For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)*

*Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*

*(Hebrews 3:3-6 ESV)*

- **The church is a temple.**

*If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.*

*(1 Timothy 3:15 ESV)*

**God's Spirit dwells within the church.**

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.  
(Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV)*

### **God's glory is displayed through the church.**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.  
(1 Peter 2:4-5 ES V)*

- **The church is a field.**

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers.  
You are God's field, God's building.  
(1 Corinthians 3:6-9 ESV)*

- **The church is a tree.**

*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural*

*branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.  
(Romans 11:17-24 ESV)*

*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he  
it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.  
(John 15:5 ESV)*

■ **The church is a priesthood.**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God  
chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a  
spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices  
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I  
am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever  
believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who  
believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders  
rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a  
rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were  
destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,  
a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of  
him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.  
(1 Peter 2:4-9 ESV)*

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made  
us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion  
forever and ever. Amen.  
(Revelation 1:5-6 ESV)*

*...and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,  
and they shall reign on the earth."  
(Revelation 5:10 ESV)*

■ **The church is a body.**

*Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all  
partake of the one bread.  
(1 Corinthians 10:17 ESV)*

*And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to  
the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

*(Ephesians 1:22-23 ESV)*

**We are a unified body.**

*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*(Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV)*

**We are a diverse body.**

*For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*

*(1 Corinthians 12:14 ESV)*

*For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

*(Romans 12:4-5 ESV)*

**Description of the Church...**

- The church is universal and local.  
The church in a house...

*Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.*

*(Romans 16:5 ESV)*

*The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.*

*(1 Corinthians 16:19 ESV)*

The church in a city...

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours. . .*

*(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)*

The church in a region...

*So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.*  
(Acts 9:31 ESV)

The church in the world...

*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...*  
(Ephesians 5:25 ESV)

*And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.*  
(1 Corinthians 12:28 ESV)

The dominant emphasis in the New Testament is on the local church.

Out of the 114 times *ekklesia* is mentioned in the NT , at least 90 of them refer to specific local gatherings of believers.

- The local church is a clear expression of the universal body of Christ. The church is both visible and invisible.

The invisible church: The church as God sees it from heaven.

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."*  
(2 Timothy 2:19 ESV)

- Includes all true believers.

The visible church: The church as we see it on earth.

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,  
To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. . .*  
(2 Thessalonians 1:1 ESV)

- Includes some false believers.

*Their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some.*

*(2 Timothy 2:17-18 ESV)*

*I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*

*(Acts 20:29-30 ESV)*

*“Many sheep are without and many wolves are within.”*

*Augustine*

The church includes both New Testament believers and Old Testament believers.

Old Testament gatherings...

*On the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’*

*(Deuteronomy 4:10 ESV)*

*This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.*

*(Acts 7:38 ESV)*

*“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”*

*(Psalm 22:22 ESV; Quoted in Hebrews 2:12 ESV)*

Old Testament faith...

*By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch*

*them.*  
*(Hebrews 11:24-28 ESV)*

*And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*  
*(Hebrews 11:39-40 ESV)*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. . .*  
*(Hebrews 12:1 ESV)*

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*  
*(Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV)*

Key differences...

Old Testament believers trusted in the coming Christ.

New Testament believers trust in the crucified Christ.

Old Testament believers are ethnically distinct.

New Testament believers are ethnically diverse.

Old Testament believers lived under their own government with God-given laws.

New Testament believers live among the rulers of the nations.

Old Testament believers are required to circumcise their male offspring.

New Testament believers are required to baptize all believers.

- The church includes both Jews and Gentiles.

*For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken*

*down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...*

*(Ephesians 2:14-20 ESV)*

- The church is unified and diversified.

*...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.*

*(John 17:21-23 ESV)*

*To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours...*

*(1 Corinthians 1:2 ESV)*

We work for unity in the local church.

*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*

*(1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV)*

*...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*

*(Philippians 2:2 ESV)*

Division is dangerous.

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.*

*(Romans 16:17-18 ESV)*

*It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.*  
*(Jude 1:19 ESV)*

Division is deadly.

*Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*(Galatians 5:19-21 ESV)*

We work for unity in the universal church.

*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

*(Ephesians 4:4-6 ESV)*

- The church and the Israel of God...

*And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*

*(Galatians 6:16 ESV)*

*For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.*

*His praise is not from man but from God.*

*(Romans 2:28-29 ESV)*

- **We are descendants of Israel's father.**

*He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he*

*had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.*  
(Romans 4:11-12 ESV)

*But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.*  
(Romans 9:6-8 ESV)

*As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"*  
(Romans 9:25 ESV)

■ **We are heirs of Israel's promise.**

*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*  
(Galatians 3:29 ESV)

*For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the*

*promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.  
(Romans 4:13-25 ESV)*

■ **We are recipients of Israel's blessings.**

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.  
(1 Peter 2:4-10 ESV)*

**The church and the kingdom of God...**

■ **The church is not the kingdom.**

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.  
(Acts 8:12 ESV)

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.  
(Acts 19:8 ESV)

And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.  
(Acts 20:25 ESV)

...proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.  
(Acts 28:31 ESV)

- **The kingdom creates the church.**

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."  
(Matthew 5:3 ESV)*

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,  
but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."  
(Matthew 7:21 ESV)*

*Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.  
(Matthew 13:40-43 ESV)*

- **The church proclaims the kingdom.**

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.  
(Matthew 24:14 ESV)*

- **The church is the instrument of the kingdom.**

*Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.  
You received without paying; give without pay.  
(Matthew 10:8 ESV)*

*The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"  
(Luke 10:17 ESV)*

- **The church is the guardian of the kingdom.**

*"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind*

*on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*  
(Matthew 16:19 ESV)

▪ **Jesus will return for his church.**

*Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds,  
from one end of heaven to the other.*  
(Matthew 24:30-31 ESV)

*Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.*  
(1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 ESV)

▪ **Jesus will consummate his kingdom.**

*Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*  
(1 Corinthians 15:24 ESV)

**History of the Church:**

1. The Established Church (1<sup>st</sup> Century)
2. The Persecuted Church (1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century)
3. The Universal Church (4<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Century)
4. The Reformed Church (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Century)
  - Reformers
  - Radical Reformers
  - Anabaptists
  - Puritans

5. The Baptist Church (17<sup>th</sup> Century)
  - The Baptist Church (1612)
  - The Southern Baptist Church (1845)

### **Function of the Church:**

1. Worship – exalt the name of the Lord
2. Edification – build up other believers (One Another passages)

*"So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church."  
(1 Corinthians 14:12 ESV)*

*"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."  
(1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV)*

3. Accountability – bear one another burdens, confess our sins one to another, confront one another in sin.

*"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load."  
(Galatians 6:1–5 ESV)*

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."  
(James 5:16 ESV)*

4. Proclamation – spread the word of God

### **Offices of the Church:**

## **1. Elders/Bishops/Overseers/Pastors**

*"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil."*  
(1 Timothy 3:1–7 ESV)

*"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.""*  
(1 Peter 5:1–5 ESV)

## **2. Deacons**

*"Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."*  
(1 Timothy 3:8–13 ESV)

## **Ordinances of the Church:**

Those things that are both demonstrated and commanded in the New Testament.

1. Baptism

2. The Lord's Supper

**Doctrine of the Church (Creeds):**

1. First London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist 1644)
2. The Standard Confession (General Baptist 1660)
3. Second London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist 1689)
4. Philadelphia Baptist Confession (Baptist 1742)
5. New Hampshire Baptist Confession (Baptist 1833)
6. Baptist Faith & Message (Southern Baptist 1925, 1963, 2000)

**Future of the Church:**

Christ will one day return for his bride, the Church and renew all things. The Church is described as the New Jerusalem and a holy city in the book of Revelation.

*"Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*

(Revelation 21:9–14 ESV)

## Session 3: Who is Craig Memorial Baptist Church?

### One Among Many: (Distinctives)

- Protestant
- Baptist
  - Autonomy of the church
  - Elder led, congregational rule
  - Believers baptism (believer only church)
  - Missional
  - Priesthood of the believers
  - Cooperating
- Southern Baptist
  - Unified around the Baptist Faith & Message
  - Cooperating with like minded churches to proclaim the gospel
    - Associations
    - State Convention
      - 37% to SBC
      - 63% to Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
    - National Convention
      - Cooperative Program
        - International Mission Board (50.41%)
          - Richmond, VA
          - Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
        - North American Mission Board (22.79%)
          - Alpharetta, GA
          - Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
        - Seminaries (22.16%)
          - Southern (Louisville, KY)
          - Southeastern (Wake Forest, NC)
          - New Orleans (New Orleans, LA)
          - Southwestern (Fort Worth, TX)
          - Midwestern (Kansas City, MO)
          - Golden Gate (San Francisco, CA)

### Craig Memorial Baptist Church Membership

1. Familiarity with CraigMBC
2. Evidence a saving relationship with Christ
3. Attend membership class
4. Recommended to the congregation by appropriate leadership
5. Accepted by CMBC congregation
6. Believers Baptism

### **CMBC Government**

As it currently stands, CMBC is elder/pastor led, congregational rule. In addition to pastoral leadership, the board of deacons play a significant role in the decision making process. While the pastor(s) and deacons should lead in such a way that the congregation would desire to submit to their leadership, neither the pastor(s) or deacons possess any ultimate authority to act on their own. With the exception of any areas that the congregation delegates to the pastor(s) and deacons, ultimate authority rests in the hands of the membership. This is an area that will require some time to develop over the subsequent months and presented to the membership.

### **Ministries & Fellowships of CMBC:**

1. Sunday morning Worship – This serves as the main gathering of the membership of CMBC. Members should seek to be present regularly for this ministry. Membership requires participation and participation in this ministry is expected. We offer a brief children’s sermon during the morning service as well as children’s church for children through 5 years old.
2. We offer a fellowship time prior to morning Bible study beginning @ 9:30am.
3. Sunday morning Bible Study – We currently offer Bible study for all ages from 10:00–10:45.
4. We offer a Sunday Evening Worship time at 6:00pm. There are occasions when we cancel this gathering (ex. Holidays).
5. Wednesday evening Bible Study – We offer an additional time of Bible study on Wednesday evenings @ 7:00. After prayer and music together we dismiss our children to mission groups.
6. Discipleship – We are in the process of developing our plan of discipleship and will be offering further opportunities to grow in our faith together. Recently our women have launched a discipleship opportunity

(Mom2Mom) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday morning of each month @ 10:00am.

7. Missions – In addition to cooperating with other SBC churches for the sake of missions, we support other mission efforts both nationally and internationally. Currently our mission support consists of giving to the Cooperative Program and the South Fork Baptist Association. We plan to see further development in this area in the months ahead.

8. Others – we also offer a variety of other ministries and fellowships throughout the year that seek to engage our community such as Vacation Bible School. We look forward to growing in this area in the future.

### **CMBC Mission:**

We do not currently have a mission statement that serves to direct our focus.

Pastor Randy's personal mission statement is:

*Proclaiming the word of God for the Glory of God, to exalt Christ and redeem sinners.*

CMBC will be striving to make our number one priority and calling the proclamation of the gospel! We are seeking to ensure that this provides the foundation for all that we do.

Ours is the work of proclaiming, only God can provide the increase. We leave what only God can do to Him and seek to be faithful in our mission of proclaiming.

### **The Current State of Craig Memorial Baptist Church:**

CMBC is currently going through a major growth and change process. CMBC has existed under the leadership of the same pastor for the past 38 years. This pastor retired in December of 2016. Randy Starkey has served as Interim Pastor since March 26, 2017.

During this transition CMBC found itself struggling financially and in need of making necessary changes to enable CMBC to be faithful stewards of the resources God continues to graciously provide.

### **Financial Snapshot:**

The Current Budget of the church has been fluid since the transition and will be clearly established with the start of the new church year on

October. It appears, based on averages, that the church can sustain a budget of approximately \$122,000.

Approximate Financial Standing as of February 2017:

Checking: \$7,000

Building: \$15,000

Savings: \$1,000

C

E

S

Approximate Financial Standing as of May 2017:

Checking: \$20,000

Building: \$20,000

Savings: \$1,000

C

E

S

While the church is currently only paying a part-time pastor salary, the clear trajectory of the church is in a positive direction.

## Sample Church Covenant

Having experienced the new birth through the work of the Holy Spirit,  
repented of our sin, and embraced the marvelous gospel of Jesus Christ;

By God's grace and for His glory;

In order to make Christ known as the greatest pursuit and highest treasure;

We covenant together . . .

. . . to uphold the centrality of the gospel of Christ and the sufficiency of  
God's Word through which it is made known,

. . . to humbly give ourselves entirely in submission to the inspired Word of  
God as it is contained in the pages of the Bible,

. . . to personally pursue a deeper love and passion for Christ and His Word,

. . . to encourage one another in the Word and by the Word that we might  
increasingly walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,

. . . to faithfully gather with the body for the purpose of worship, edification,  
and accountability, and

. . . to sacrificially support the ministry of the church through means of our  
time, talents, and money

. . . in order that the light of the gospel of Christ, represented by the corporate  
testimony of Riverside Church might shine brightly and clearly throughout  
this community and to the ends of the earth.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or  
think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the  
church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. — Ephesians 3:20–21



# Southern Baptist Convention

## The Baptist Faith and Message

### THE 2000 BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

#### I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

#### II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

##### A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing,

all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

## **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

## **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship,

evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

### III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

### IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of

peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a

congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of

obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

## IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the

realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

## X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18;*

*24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

### XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

### XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such

cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

## XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

## XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

## XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*



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<sup>1</sup> Dever, Mark; *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Frame, John; *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*, p. 273.