

# **The Essentials of Our Faith**

## **The Bible**

The Bible is God's perfect word written by men who were divinely inspired. It contains an accurate history of God's interactions with mankind including man's fall and God's plan for salvation. The Bible, in its original manuscript, is without error and is authoritative in its teaching on all matters. (Matthew 5:17-18, Matthew 22:29, Luke 24:44-46, John 16:13-15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 1:25, 2 Peter 1:19-21)

## **God**

There is only one true God, the creator of all things. He has revealed Himself to mankind in three ways: His creation, His Word, and His Son. God has always existed and will always exist in three equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1, Genesis 2:7, Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 40:28, Mark 1:9-11, Romans 1:9-10, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6, Colossians 1:15, 1 John 4:8, 1 John 5:7, Revelation 1:8)

## **Jesus**

Having never been created, rather eternally existing, Jesus is the physical incarnation of God. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but instead He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and gave His life as the only atonement for sin. (John 1:1&14, Colossians 1:13-16, Hebrews 1:2, Galatians 4:4-6, Luke 1:26-27,34-35, 1 John 2:1-2, Acts 4:12, Philippians 2:5-8)

## **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Bible and through illumination He enables mankind to understand truth. He is active in convicting mankind of their sin and leading draws them to salvation in Christ Jesus. At the moment of salvation, He seals the believer into the body of Christ. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to be conformed to the image of Christ. (John 14:26, 2 Corinthians 3:17, John 6:4; John 16:12-15, Romans 8:9&29, Galatians 5:16-26, 2 Peter 1:21, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 1:13)

## **Creation**

All matter in the universe and all life therein were created by God from nothing. Man is the direct result of God's creation and has not evolved from some lower form. (Genesis 1&2, John 1:1-5)

## **Mankind**

We believe "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them." Therefore, gender is a gift of God and something that should be celebrated. God designed man and woman unique and of equal value and worth. God designed man and woman to be in relationship "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." The one flesh union of one man and one woman for life was God's design for marriage from the beginning. (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:3-8)

## **Sin**

In the beginning, man was created in the image of God perfect and without sin. By voluntary transgression, the first man, Adam, fell from his sinless state. As a result, all of mankind, by constraint and choice, are now sinners and subject to the consequences of sin, eternal spiritual death and punishment in Hell. (Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23)

## **Salvation**

As an act of grace, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the atoning sacrifice, giving His life on the cross. Three days later, Christ was raised from the dead conquering sin and death. It is only by admitting our need for forgiveness, believing that Jesus is the Son of God who died for mankind, and confessing and repenting of our sins that we may be placed in right standing with God. It is no work of man, but only faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brings salvation. (John 3:16, 1 John 2:2, Romans 5:8, 1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6, Philippians 2:6-8, Ephesians 5:2, John 15:13, Romans 6:23, Romans 10:9-10, Hebrews 10:12-14)

## **The Church**

We believe 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 and responsibilities invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. The local congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through affirmation of the membership. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord and one another as the family of Christ. The church's scriptural offices are pastors/elders 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. (Matthew 16:18-19, Ephesians 2:20-22, 1 Peter 2:5, Hebrews 10:24-25, Colossians 3:16, Romans 12:5, Matthew 18:20, Acts 2:41-47, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9)

## **Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

While not necessary for salvation, we maintain the ordinances of baptism by immersion and the Lord's supper out of obedience to Christ. Baptism symbolizes a believer's commitment to the gospel as a public profession of faith. The Lord's supper acts as a reminder of the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf. Both ordinances are to be observed by professing believers in Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Romans 6:4, Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)

## **Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate appointed end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; the saved will be caught up with Christ in the air; 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 dwell forever with the Lord. (Matthew 16:27, Matthew 24:36, Luke 12:40, Luke 17:22-37, Luke 21:27-28, John 14:1-3, Acts 1:11, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, Hebrews 9:27-28, 2 Peter 3:7-18, Revelation 3:11)