



STATEMENT OF FAITH

Preface

Grace Baptist Church is a multigenerational community, united in the love and truth of God, who exists to make and multiply Christ-followers who magnify the glory of God. While we are engaged in many different ministries in our attempt to accomplish this mission, our primary task is to teach and model God's Word, in the power of the Spirit, engaging our world as agents of transformation.

The Elders and Pastors of Grace Baptist Church are deeply committed to studying and teaching God's Word with diligence, clarity, authority, and love. We also strive to model it consistently and expect to be held accountable to do so.

As a local gathering of Christ-followers, we do not wish to exclude any who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior from fellowship with us. However, we ask all who worship with us to respect our doctrinal position and work diligently to maintain the unity of the Body in the bond of peace. By His Grace and For His Glory,

*The Elders and Pastors
Grace Baptist Church*

Introduction

What We Teach presents the basic teaching position of the Elders and Pastors of Grace Baptist Church. You will notice this expands on the Statement of Faith affirmed by those who desire to partner with us through membership.

The Statement of Faith presents the core, shared, doctrinal beliefs that form the foundation of our unity as a church family. These are the truths we all affirm. To be a member, you need only affirm the Statement of Faith and complete the other steps in the Journey process. However, as Elders and Pastors, we want you to know where we stand on issues that go beyond our Statement of Faith.

What We Teach is designed to do just that. Here's what you'll find. In each section, the Statement of Faith is followed by additional material describing our teaching position. Our intent is to set forth our stance on the topics, and as well, allow for profitable theological discussions here at Grace Baptist. Lastly, we realize godly Christ-followers have debated doctrinal issues for centuries and too often the dialogue has been unedifying and divisive. It is our great hope and prayer that, within the family of Grace Baptist Church, discussions about God's truth will be wrapped in God's love and will allow God's Word to be the final arbiter of what we believe and teach.

Our Church exists to make and multiply Christ-followers who magnify the glory of God. To accomplish this mission, our Church strives to teach and model God's Word in the power of the Spirit, engaging in the world as agents of transformation.

The Bible

We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are God's inspired revelation to man. They are the very word of God, without error, completely authoritative, essential, sufficient, and trustworthy, and constitute the only infallible rule for truth and life. It is our constant privilege to read, study, teach, obey, and model God's word in order to be truthful and loving ambassadors for Christ to our world.

Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:15, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 3:14-16; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12; John 19:36, 37; Romans 9:17, 10:1, 11:2

What We Teach About the Bible

God is the creative source of the Bible in that he “breathed” out what was written so that the Scriptures are without error as originally given. The Holy Spirit superintended the human authors so that, using their own vocabulary and experiences, they wrote down what God breathed out. Further, we believe God has preserved his Word down through history so that today, through the science of textual criticism, we have the original word groups of Scripture in the original languages.

That the Bible is not contradictory when studied with an understanding of the original contexts and use of language. Further, we believe when all the facts are in, our conviction that the Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, and fully authoritative will be fully vindicated, as Spirit-illuminated readers approach the text with literary and linguistic integrity.

That, in order to have a thoroughly authoritative Bible, we must use a translation that most accurately brings across both the words and the meaning of the original authors.

That it is necessary to teach the Bible with great diligence and integrity. We understand the beginning place of meaning to be what the original author intended the original audience to understand from the words he used. It is our task to find this meaning first and then intelligently and faithfully apply the text’s truth principles to our own hearts first and then to our people.

That, while there may be many applications of the biblical text, there is only one true interpretation. We can find this meaning as we use the historical, grammatical, and theological tools available to us prayerfully and diligently. We teach that the Bible is true and everlasting. As such, it is the greatest treasure of knowledge known to man and is to be the joyful pursuit of God’s people and the source and subject of our teaching and preaching.

The Triune God

We believe there is only one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Our God is an intelligent, spiritual, and knowable personal being. He is infinite and unchanging in all his attributes. He is supremely powerful and knows all things exhaustively in one eternal moment, including the free future decisions of all humanity.

Genesis 1:1; 1 Kings 18:39; Psalm 100:3; 115:1–3; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 5:3, 4; John 1:1, 14, 18; 8:58, 59; 10:31–33; Isaiah 46:8–11; Ephesians 1:9–11; Daniel 4:34, 35; Romans 11:33–36

God the Father

We believe God the Father is the creator and sustainer of all things. He is infinitely good, perfectly holy, and boundless in his love. He is a loving Father, always available to those who, through faith in Christ, call upon him in truth. Having brought all creation into existence through his word, he is sovereign over all things so that, ultimately, his purpose will be fulfilled and his glory fully displayed.

Psalm 145:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Genesis 1:1; Ephesians 1:4–6; 3:9; 4:6; Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:33–36; 8:14, 15; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 1:11; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Habakkuk 1:12; Psalm 50:14, 15; Matthew 11:28–30; John 6:38, 42; 8:38–47; 1 Peter 1:14–16; 1 John 3:1–3; John 1:11–13; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5–9

What We Teach About God

That God the Father is the only absolute ruler in the universe, and upholds all things by his power. He has decreed from eternity all that comes to pass. He continually upholds all things by the word of his power and, working both immediately and through secondary causes, guides and directs all things so that ultimately his plans will be accomplished and his glory magnified. As Creator, he is father to all men, but is spiritual Father only to Christ-followers. He saves from wrath and sin all who turn to Christ in repentance and faith, adopting them into his family as beloved children. We teach that, while sovereign, God is neither the author nor approver of sin, nor does he in any way annul the accountability of free, intelligent, moral beings.

That God has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom he would have as his own and has also chosen to bring them to repentance and faith by means of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel.

God the Son

We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son through whom all things were created and now are held together. He is fully human and fully divine. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He took on all human attributes, yet lived a sinless life. He gave over the independent use of his divine attributes to the Father, but retained his divine essence. He died on the cross as a vicarious substitute for all believers, rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God where he intercedes for his people. He now dwells in all Christ-followers as their Lord and Savior. He will return one day in power and glory to judge the world and consummate his redemptive mission.

John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1, 2; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:9; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23-25; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:14, 18; Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Hebrews 7:25, 26; 9:24; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3:11-13; Revelation 20:1-6; Isaiah 9:6, 7

What We Teach About the Son

That God the Father created all things through God the Son and that through God the Son all things continue to hold together and operate.

That, in the incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity added all the essential characteristics of humanity becoming the God-man. He took on the position of servant while never divesting himself of any divine attributes.

That, while Jesus Christ was fully human, he did not inherit a sin nature, being virgin born.

That the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God to man, remedy the problem of sin, and rule over God's kingdom.

That Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.

That his resurrection was real, bodily, and a complete triumph over sin and death, as well as the first fruits of the resurrection Christ-followers will one day experience.

That Jesus Christ is Head of his church and continues to exercise his offices of prophet, priest, and king through godly human leadership.

That Jesus Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father on high and one day will return in glory and honor to rescue the righteous and judge the world.

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son to glorify Jesus Christ. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. By his powerful and mysterious work, he regenerates spiritually dead sinners through the Gospel, awakening them to repentance and faith. In him, they are baptized into union with Christ and his body, the Church. By the Spirit's power, believers are illuminated, sanctified, comforted, and adopted into God's family and gifted for service. God the Spirit indwells and fills each Christ-follower for godly living and is the seal of their promised inheritance.

John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:7, 8, 13-15; Romans 8:9, 11, 14; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 14; Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 4:6; 1 Peter 4:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Romans 15:16

What We Teach About the Holy Spirit

That God the Spirit is a divine person, eternal and underived, possessing all the attributes of deity and personality.

The unique work of God the Spirit includes his work in creation, the incarnation, the creation of the Bible, and the work of salvation.

That God the Spirit is the agent of regeneration when, by means of the Gospel, he imparts new life to sinners, granting them repentance and faith.

That God the Spirit is the agent of illumination in the lives of Christ-followers, opening their minds to understand God's Word.

That God the Spirit is the agent of sanctification in the lives of Christ-followers as he works within them both to will and to work for the good pleasure of God.

That God the Spirit is sovereign in giving spiritual gifts for the perfecting of the saints and the building up of the Body of Christ. Further, we teach that the gifts of tongues and other sign gifts in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of Christ-followers today.

That God continues to work miracles, effect miraculous healing, and demonstrate his power as the sovereign creator and sustainer of our universe. We teach that it is the privilege of every Christ-follower to pray for healing believing that God may act in ways that confound the scientific and medical community.

That God, while active in this way, no longer grants miraculous power to individuals.

Mankind

We believe mankind is the special creation of God, intentionally designed as male and female to bear his image as the crowning work of his creation. Adam and Eve were created without sin to worship God in obedience, care for his creation, and populate the world with worshippers. Through Adam's sinful act, they failed and brought death into the world. All human beings inherit a sin nature from Adam and are alienated from God due to sin's pervasive corruption. Though God's eternal attributes and divine power are clearly seen in creation, sinful humanity suppresses that truth in their unrighteousness. They are spiritually blind and both unwilling and unable to see the light of the Gospel apart from the regenerating power of God. As those who bear his image, all humanity stands in relationship to him, either in belief, obedience, and humble worship, resulting in eternal life, or in unbelief, rejection, and rebellion, resulting in eternal punishment.

Genesis 1:26–28; 5:1; James 3:8,9; Genesis 2:15, 16; 3:17–19; Romans 1:18–20; 3:23; 5:12–14; 8:8; Ephesians 2:1–3; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4; John 3:16; Matthew 25:44–46; Revelation 20:12–14; 2 Peter 3:11–13

What We Teach About Mankind

That man was directly and immediately created by God without sin. Yet, Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's temptation and chose to rebel against God bringing sin into the world, passing on both their guilt and sin nature to all their posterity.

That, despite the entrance of sin into the human soul, mankind remains under the common grace of our benevolent God. We teach that, as God's image-bearers, mankind holds the primary place in God's economy, making human life sacred, valuable, and worthy to be protected according to God's laws.

That love for God and for our neighbors are to be characteristic of those who follow Christ, while social injustice and the violence it spawns are to be opposed righteously in keeping with the teaching of Scripture. However, given mankind's depraved state, the only hope for peace on earth is to be found in the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the full establishment of his kingdom on earth.

Salvation

We believe that salvation from the wrath of God for sin is accomplished by God the Spirit through the Gospel. This salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the promises of God concerning the work of Christ alone. All who repent of their sins and place their faith in God the Son are brought from death into life, adopted into God's family, indwelt by God the Spirit, and kept by God the Father eternally.

John 3:36; 16:8; Romans 1:16, 17; 8:9; Ephesians 2:4–10; Titus 3:5; John 1:11–13; Acts 16:31; 1 Peter 1:3, 4; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; Proverbs 3:5,6; John 5:24; Romans 8:9–11; Ephesians 1:13, 14; John 10:27–29; Romans 8:31–39

What We Teach About Salvation

That salvation is solely of God's grace and never merited by any human work or worth.

That God, for reasons known only to himself, sovereignly chose some in Christ from among fallen humanity to graciously regenerate, justify, sanctify, and glorify.

That God has not only ordained the ends of salvation but also the means whereby sinners are brought out of darkness and into light. It is through the Gospel, lived out, and proclaimed by Christ-followers that God the Spirit brings sinners to repentance and faith and secures their eternal redemption.

That sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of each person to repent and believe the Gospel, trusting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

That God's elective choice was not predicated on any human action or God's anticipation of what they might believe, but solely arises from his own grace and mercy.

That God's activity in the salvation of sinners is fully aligned with his other attributes, especially his omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love.

That Jesus Christ accomplished our salvation through the shedding of his blood and sacrificial death on the cross. Further, his death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive.

That, on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, and the power of sin. Further, he or she is justified, being declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God as a beloved son or daughter.

That, on the cross, our sins were imputed to Christ and that in his death he fully paid and forever put away the penalty our sins had amassed before the court of heaven.

That, by faith, the righteousness of God is imputed to us so that he accepts us as righteous in Christ.

That our justification was confirmed by the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead which also guarantees a future resurrection to life for all Christ-followers.

That every Christ-follower, having been justified in the eyes of God, is a saint, indwelt by God the Spirit, and is as accepted and forgiven by God as they will ever be. This standing is immediate upon salvation.

That every Christ-follower is also still at war with indwelling sin and is called to persevere in holiness, resisting temptations to sin through the power of God the Spirit. Accordingly, Christ-followers are being progressively sanctified and set apart unto God.

That all Christ-followers, in whom God the Spirit dwells, will persevere in holiness until they see Jesus face to face. In reality, this security is based on the perseverance of God the Spirit whose power is at work within the Christ-follower both to work and to will according to what God loves. The security of the saints is actually better understood as the perseverance of God in his saints.

The Gospel

We believe the Gospel is the great news that God will save sinners from the eternal judgment they deserve through the life, death, and resurrection of God the Son when they repent of their sins and turn in faith alone to follow him.

Mark 1:14, 15; Romans 1:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Acts 2:37-39; 4:12; Romans 6:1-11; 10:9-17; Luke 9:23

What We Teach About the Gospel

That the Gospel centers on God the Father's promise of redemption, accomplished in the person and work of God the Son, and applied by God the Spirit to all who believe.

That faith comes by hearing through the word of Christ in the Gospel as God the Spirit grants new life and simultaneously brings about the free response of repentance and faith, restoring those previously dead in sin to life in Christ.

That it is a great privilege to partner with Jesus Christ in the rescue mission of salvation and that evangelism in the normal rhythms of life is to be the daily lifestyle of all who would follow the Savior.

The Church

We believe that all those whom God the Spirit regenerates through the Gospel are immediately brought into union with God the Son and become part of his Body, the universal church. As a local representation of the universal church, our Church is united with Christ-followers everywhere under the Lordship of God the Son. We celebrate our union with Christ and our unity with one another by observing baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Church of which Christ is the Head is distinguished by an unswerving commitment to God's truth and a vibrant love for God, one another, and the world. The church lives to show the world the power of God's transforming grace through the Gospel and through their unity, love, and service.

Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:1; 12:5; Acts 2:41; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:10; 4:3; 5:23, 24; Colossians 1:24; 4:15; Galatians 1:1, 2; Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:14, 15; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:36–39; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; John 13:34; 15:12–17; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; 4:6, 7; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:13, 14; 2:15; 4:1, 2

What We Teach About the Church

That the one head of the church is Jesus Christ.

That Jesus Christ continues to govern his church as its prophet, priest and king through godly and gifted men set apart by God the Spirit and affirmed by the congregation as Elders.

That the Elder team is a functioning plurality and is accountable to God and the congregation to live up to the biblical qualifications of the office.

That the ordinance of baptism is a voluntary activity by which the regenerate Christ-follower publicly testifies to his or her salvation, identifies with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ through immersion, and unites with the local congregation as a member of the body of Christ. Baptism is a community-creating event and is to be part of the corporate gathered worship of the church.

That the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a communal meal of the gathered church by which, in faith, they acknowledge Christ as essential to the nourishing of their spiritual lives. While the bread and cup remain bread and juice, they nevertheless are used of God the Spirit to remind the faithful that their salvation has been accomplished solely by the work of the Savior.

That the church has been given a mission by Jesus Christ, to go everywhere to make and multiply Christ-followers who will magnify the glory of God.

Last Things

We believe that God will bring all things to their appropriate end for his glory at the right time. God the Son will return, visibly and bodily as he promised. The dead will be raised, and every account settled. For those in Christ, the reward will be eternal life in the new heavens and new earth. But eternal conscious punishment in hell will be the just sentence for all those who reject God's gracious offer of salvation.

Isaiah 46:8–10; Ephesians 1:11; Mark 8:38; 14:62; Philippians 3:20, 21; 2 Peter 3:9–13; Revelation 20:11–15; 21:22–27

What We Teach About Last Things

That the return of Jesus Christ will precede the Millennium and that he will reign in righteousness on the earth.

That Christ-followers are to live with great expectancy and diligence in light of the return of our Savior to judge the world in righteousness. This blessed hope is what purifies, motivates, and encourages the Church to live obediently and righteously in this sinful world.

That all will be resurrected at some time in the future. Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation will be resurrected to eternal life in the new heavens and new earth where righteousness will dwell. Those who have died without saving faith will be consigned to hell, separated from the gracious presence of God, and subjected to eternal punishment.

That after the judgment, God the Son will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, fulfilling the eternal plan of redemption and testifying that God alone reigns forever and ever.