



WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

About God, Man, Jesus, Salvation, Baptism, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, Discipleship and Church Membership

WHO IS GOD?

1. GOD IS THE GOOD CREATOR

- *Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*
- *Psalms 19:1 - "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship."*
- *Romans 12:2 - "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

God existed before anything else. He spoke the world and all that is in it into existence. Because God created us, He has the right to tell us how to live.

He is sovereign over all things and He is good. He is the standard of what is right and good. He knows what is good for us. He decides what is true and what is best for us. He has revealed His perfect will and salvation plan through His Word, the Bible.

2. GOD IS ALWAYS LOVING AND RIGHTEOUS

- *Exodus 34:6-7 - "The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, "YAHWEH, THE LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty."*

God is incredibly loving and forgiving, but He also says that he will not excuse the guilty. He will not allow sin to go unpunished. He can't, because he is holy and righteous. If He is the standard of what is true and good, then He must punish any rebellion against Him.

How can God punish sin and still forgive? How can He do both at the same time?

- *John 3:16 - "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."*
- *2 Corinthians 5:21 - "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."*

God is both righteous and loving because he put the sin and wrath that we deserved on Jesus. Jesus took our punishment and gave us what he rightfully deserved: right standing before God. God was righteous because he punished sin and loving because he forgave. This shows us that Jesus is the only way to salvation!

3. GOD IS THREE PERSONS IN ONE NATURE

- *2 Corinthians 13:14 - "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*

There is one living and true God. All other gods are counterfeits. God has revealed himself through His Word as a trinity. Three distinct persons in one distinct nature, essence and being.

- *1 Corinthians 8:6 - "Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."*

God the Father is the authority to which the Son, the Holy Spirit, and all of creation submit. He is the creator and sustainer of all creation. He rules over it and sustains it with providential care. All of creation submits to the sovereign rule and reign of the Father in heaven. By His will, the story of redemption has been written.

- *Hebrews 1:3 - "He [Jesus] 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."*

God the Son existed before all things and thus was not created. He is co-equal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God's revelation of Himself to us in human form. He came to earth to accomplish the will of the Father. Jesus lived a perfect life on earth and died a substitutionary death on the cross to make a way to the Father for those who believe in Him. Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Father to rule and mediate on our behalf.

- *John 14:26 - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."*

God the Holy Spirit is fully God and inspired the authors of the Bible to write God's Word. The Holy Spirit is God's presence that dwells with us now, after Christ ascended. The Holy Spirit teaches us, guides us, comforts us, and seals our salvation until the end of all things. The Holy Spirit convicts men of sin and is the means by which we are regenerated from death to life. The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts that we are meant to use to serve the church.

WHO IS MAN?

1. HUMANITY WAS CREATED GOOD

- *Genesis 1:27 - "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*
- *Psalms 139:13-16 - "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

Humanity is the special creation of God, made in God's own image, both male and female. We were made perfectly in the beginning. We were made to be in a perfect relationship with God forever.

Every human is made in the image of God. No matter our outward differences, each person is full of dignity and worthy of respect and love.

2. WE CHOSE REBELLION NOT LIFE

- *Isaiah 53:6 - "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*
- *Romans 3:23 - "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."*

Adam & Eve chose to rebel against God and brought sin to the human race. After Adam, all men are born into sin. Not only do we have a sin nature, but each of us have chosen to sin and rebel against God.

3. ALL OF US ARE SINNERS

- *Romans 3:10-12 - "No one is righteous—not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one."*

No human is without sin. Every one of us is a sinner who sins. No exceptions.

Our sin preferences are all different. Some are predisposed to certain sins and others are not. Just because we have a desire in our body does that mean that it is good or that we should act on it. We must judge all of our desires and actions against the Word of God.

4. BECAUSE OF OUR SIN, WE RIGHTFULLY DESERVE ETERNITY IN HELL

- *Romans 6:23 - "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."*

This is the bad news. If we don't understand the bad news first, then we can never really understand the good news of Jesus dying to save us. If we never get diagnosed with our problem, then we can never fix it.

Our sin problem is that we rightfully deserve hell separated from God and we have no way to remedy that problem.

We can't earn our way to God. We can't wash away our sin. We can't gain forgiveness in any other way than what God has ordained. Apart from God working in our lives, we don't even have a desire to seek after God.

WHO IS JESUS?

1. JESUS IS FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

- *Philippians 2:5-8 - "You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross."*

Jesus came to earth as the Son of God and lived as a man perfectly pleasing to God. He was sinless and perfect in all ways. He claimed to be the Son of God with his Words and He proved He was the Son of God by his miracles and resurrection. He never ceased being God while he was on earth.

2. JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, THE CHRIST

- *Genesis 3:14-15 - "Then the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*
- *Romans 5:7-8 - "Now most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."*

Jesus came as the promised Savior, the Messiah, the Christ. God promised from the very beginning to fix the problem that we have: sin. He saved us in a way that was unexpected though.

3. JESUS IS THE SUFFERING LAMB OF GOD

- *John 1:29 - "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."*
- *Romans 5:8 - "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."*

Jesus died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sin. He suffered in our place and made a way for our sin to be atoned for. His sacrifice was the means by which God chose to save us from our sin.

4. JESUS IS THE RISEN SAVIOR

- *John 11:25-26 - "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Jesus did not stay dead though. Jesus rose from the dead, proving that he was the Son of God and that He had power over life and death. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, he would not have been the Son of God.

We believe that if we are in Christ, then we too will be resurrected to new life. Only those who believe in Jesus to save them will spend eternity with the Father in heaven.

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE?

1. REPENT AND BELIEVE

- *1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- *Acts 2:37-38 - Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" "Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Repentance means that we turn from our former ways of sin and choose God's way instead. We believe that following God's way is the only way to true life on this earth and eternal life.

Christians were all once sinners of all kinds, but Christians do not identify by sin any longer. We identify in Jesus and Jesus sets us free from our sin to walk in the newness of life.

- *Romans 10:9-10 - "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."*

You must believe that Jesus is the only way for you to be saved from your sin. Once you believe, you will spend the rest of your life repenting of your sin. Turning from self and turning to God over and over again.

Repent and Believe are two sides of the same coin. Simply trying to change your life (repenting) will not save you unless you also believe. Believing in Jesus but repenting of sin will not save you. Scripture is clear that we must both repent and believe. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to do this! We must cry out for help!

SALVATION

There is no magic prayer to pray that will save you. The Bible says that when we confess with our mouths and believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord then we are saved. So, many times people pray at the moment of salvation and talk about these things in their prayer.

- Admit that they are a sinner and they have no way of saving themselves
- Believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for their sin
- Confess that Jesus is Lord and repent from their sin
- Decide to follow Jesus in discipleship the rest of their life

If you know that you need to be saved, cry out to God in prayer and He will save you. Then tell someone what you have prayed and what God has done for you!

WHAT IS NEXT AFTER SALVATION?

1. BAPTISM

- *Matthew 28:18-20 - "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Jesus told us in his final words before he left this earth that we are to go make disciples, baptize them and teach them. Baptism was commanded by Jesus, so we should be obedient to Him.

- *Romans 6:3-4 - "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."*

We believe that Scripture teaches that baptism is to be by immersion, after one's conversion experience and as an outward symbol of salvation.

- *1 Peter 3:21 - "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*

Baptism doesn't save you. It is the first step of obedience to Christ. It is a public acknowledgement of the inner change in your life. It is about identifying fully with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism also is the beginning of your membership with our church.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT

- *Ephesians 1:13-14 - "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

The Holy Spirit is with you and fills you at your moment of salvation. You do not need a second or separate experience of "baptism of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit indwells you when you believe in Jesus to save you. The Holy Spirit seals your life for heaven.

- *John 15:26 - "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."*
- *John 14:26 - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."*

The Holy Spirit guides you, instructs you, convicts you and points you to Jesus over and over again. He is God's presence with us and He leads us into all truth. He will never speak to you in a way that contradicts the Bible. His role is to illuminate Scripture for you to understand.

3. THE BIBLE

- *2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,*
- *2 Timothy 3:16 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

Get a Bible that you can understand (ESV, NLT, NASB, NIV)

Read it regularly. Get a plan. Start with one of the Gospels. (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John)

Read it with other people and ask questions so you can understand.

4. DISCIPLESHIP

- *Matthew 28:18-20 - "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*
- *2 Timothy 2:2 - "You have heard me teach these things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others."*
- *Hebrews 10:24-25 - "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near."*
- *1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1 - "I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved. And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ."*

The rest of the Christian life is spent maturing and growing in the knowledge of God and being transformed to look more and more like Jesus. You will grow in your love for God more as you know God more.

In order to grow, do these things:

- Be faithful to gather in corporate worship on Sunday mornings to learn from preaching.
- Be faithful to gather in small groups for Bible Study like our Life Groups.
- Ask someone to disciple you one-on-one or in a smaller group like Discipleship Groups.

5. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Belonging to the body of Christ is why God saved you. We are not meant to only have a private personal relationship with God and not belong to a church.

You need the church and the church needs you.

Once you are saved and baptized in our church, you become a member of our church.

Membership is a formal commitment to:

- **Gathering** together to learn God's Word, worship together and grow as disciples through both corporate worship and small groups.

Acts 2:42-47, Acts 11:26, Hebrews 10:24-25

- **Making disciples** within this body of Christ and outside this body.

Matthew 28:18-20, Titus 2:1-10, Romans 12:10

- **Serving** the ministries and needs of the church.

1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Romans 12:3-8, Matthew 20:28

➤ **Giving** to the needs of the church cheerfully, convictionally, proportionally, faithfully, and generously.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8, Matthew 6:19-21, 1 Timothy 6:17-19

➤ **Uniting** together over sound doctrine and shared belief in the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2, Philippians 1:27, Romans 14:19

➤ **Reconciling** with other church members when sin tries to divide us.

Matthew 18:15-20, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:32, Hebrews 12:14

➤ **Submitting** to our leaders and holding them accountable to teach God's Word faithfully.

1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:17, Acts 17:11