



CORE DOCTRINES

The Trinity

We believe God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.

God the Father is eternal, unchangeable, and the Creator of all. He is fully knowing, wise, good, loving, merciful, gracious, patient, holy, peaceful, righteous, powerful, sovereign, and perfect. (Gen. 1:1; 1 John 3:20; Rom. 16:27; Luke 18:19; 1 John 4:8; Ex. 34:6; Is. 6:3; Rom. 15:33; Is. 45:19; Ps. 115:3; Mt. 5:48)

God the Son is Jesus Christ, eternally existing and begotten from the Father. He took on human flesh for the sake of our salvation. He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together. He was born of a virgin, was crucified on a cross, buried in a tomb, and resurrected three days later to sit at the right hand of God the Father until He returns. (Matt. 1:23-25; Col. 1:15-20; John 1:14; Heb. 1:3; Mt. 28:1-8; Acts 1:9-11)

God the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son and is sent to give new life. He unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, convicts men of sin, brings about the new birth, and dwells within believers. (John 15:26-27; Eph. 1:13-14; John 16:7-12)

The Bible

We believe the sixty-six books of the Bible (39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament) to be the inspired Word of God and therefore are

inerrant in their original manuscripts. The Scriptures carry full authority, truth, and sufficiency to one's own faith and life. (Ps. 19; Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

Mankind

We believe that God made man - male and female - in His own image. As the crown of His creation, every human being is considered sacred as an image bearer of God. Both men and women stand equal before God yet are distinct in their manhood and womanhood as a fundamental distinction is made in an individual's particular biology. We believe that gender is determined by one's biological sex and not by one's self-perception or subjective expression. We believe that human dignity is not dependent on age, mental capacity, developmental stage, health, race, or gender. (Gen. 1:27; 5:2; Ps. 139:13-14; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6)

Sin

We believe that man was created good, but by temptation and voluntary transgression fell from a holy and happy state into a rebellion against the Creator. Consequently, all are now sinners upon birth. Though marred by the Fall, mankind retains the image of God and therefore possesses intrinsic value, dignity, and dominion over creation. (Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 1:18-25; Rom. 5:12-19)

Salvation

We believe that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We believe that, due to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. All who receive the Lord Jesus Christ through faith are declared righteous by God and become children of God. (John 3:5-8; Heb. 10:19-25)

The Church

We believe that God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling humanity into the fellowship of Christ's body. The Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and personally follow the gospel. The purpose of the Church is to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:12-31; Matt. 28:18-20)

Christ's Return and Eternity

We believe that the consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection of the dead, the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. Satan, with his hosts and all those outside of Christ, will be finally, fully, and forever separated from the presence of God, enduring eternal conscious punishment. The righteous shall live and reign with Him forever, serving and giving Him unending praise and glory. (Matt. 25:31-36; Rev. 20:7-15; Rev. 21:1-5)

THEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVES

Complementarianism

We believe that men and women are both created with equal dignity and value but are different by divine design. By God's design, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways in both the home and church. In relation to the church, men and women are both expected to use their gifts for the work of the ministry; however, the office of elder/pastor is reserved only for qualified men. (Gen. 1:27; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1)

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Marriage

We believe that the union of marriage is between one man and one woman. Marriages are sanctioned by God which joins a husband and wife together in a single, exclusive union as pointed out in Scripture. A marriage illustrates the relationship between Christ and His church, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife responding to her husband's love and leadership as the church responds to Christ. To model this correctly, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life. (Gen. 2:23-24; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:18-33)

Divorce

We believe that since marriage is a solemn covenant between a man, woman, and God, a broken covenant resulting in divorce is something that God hates. Divorce brings harmful consequences to both partners and families. Divorce is only permitted because of man's sin and was not part of God's original plan. As believers, we should strive to honor God's original intention of a marital relationship and should always first seek reconciliation, even in the midst of serious sin. We believe that with God's help, any marriage can be restored. (Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 19:3-9)

We believe that the only New Testament grounds for divorce are sexual sin or desertion by an unbeliever.

When one partner engages in sexual sin such as adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest (*porneia* as found in Matt. 5:32; 19:9), that partner forsakes his or her covenant obligation, the Bible permits release for the faithful partner through divorce. (1 Cor. 7:15)

The second reason divorce is permitted is when an unbelieving spouse does not desire to live with his or her believing spouse. Because "God has called us to peace", divorce is allowed and may be preferable in such situations. When an unbeliever desires to leave, trying to keep him or her in the marriage may only create greater tension and conflict. Also, if the unbeliever leaves the marital relationship permanently but is not willing to file for divorce, perhaps because of lifestyle, irresponsibility, or to avoid monetary obligations, then the believer is in an impossible situation of having legal and moral obligations that he or she cannot fulfill. Because "the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases" and is therefore no longer obligated to remain married,

the believer may file for divorce without fearing the displeasure of God. (1 Cor. 7:12-15)

Remarriage

We believe that remarriage is permitted for the faithful partner only when the divorce was on biblical grounds. The entire purpose of a biblical divorce is to make clear that the faithful partner is free to remarry, but only in the Lord. (Rom. 7:1-3)

Those who divorce on any other grounds have sinned against God and their partners, and for them to marry another is an act of adultery. This is why Paul says that a believing woman who sinfully divorces should “remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband.” If she repents from her sin of unbiblical divorce, the true fruits of that repentance would be to seek reconciliation with her former husband. The same is true for a man who divorces unbiblically. The only time such a person could remarry another is if the former spouse remarries, proves to be an unbeliever, or dies, in which case reconciliation will no longer be possible. (Mark 10:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:10-11)

Baptism by Immersion

We believe that the precedent seen in the New Testament is baptism following one’s conversion by immersion into water. Baptism by immersion is not salvific in nature, yet symbolizes the believer’s real union to Christ in His death and resurrection. In relation to the church, we practice believer’s baptism and will only baptize those who have professed faith in Christ and follow Him as Lord. While we may receive members into fellowship who have been baptized as infants in a Christian church, we do not practice infant baptism. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:26-40; 1 Cor. 12:1-11)

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

We believe that each regenerated believer bestows specific gifts given by the Holy Spirit for the purposes of edifying and building the church. Regarding the specific sign gifts in the New Testament, we believe that gifts of prophecy and tongues 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 believers. (1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 2:20)