

# What We Believe

## *Grace Community Church*

### **The Bible**

We believe that the Bible is the written Word of God; full and complete in the sixty-six books of the Bible; revealed through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). We believe that the Bible is verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents (Isaiah 30:8), authoritative and God-breathed. We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. (Matt. 5:18, 24:35; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:3-4)

### **God**

We believe in a perfectly holy, just, and infinitely loving and merciful God who is the creator and sustainer of all things (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 34:5-9; Job 38:4-30; Isaiah 42:5; Heb. 11:3), worthy of honor, confidence, and obedience. He has always existed, one in essence, and in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) having precisely the same nature, attributes, and characteristics.

### **The Father**

God the Father, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love, orders and disposes all things according to his own purpose (Ps. 145:8-9; Isaiah 46:8-11; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 8:6). As the absolute and highest ruler of the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Job 1:6-12; Ps. 103:19; Isaiah 45:22).

### **The Son**

Jesus Christ possesses all the divine attributes, and in these He is of the same substance, coequal, and coeternal with the Father (Micah 5:2; John 10:27-30, 8:58, 14:9; Heb. 1:3, 8). We believe that in the incarnation He surrendered only the prerogatives of deity without diminishing His divine essence (Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9). We believe that Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:22-25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1-3, 14-18,

5:8); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God and redeem men (Ps. 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29, 3:16; Heb. 7:26-27; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

### **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, undivided, possessing all the divine attributes, and in these He is coequal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 3:17-18). We believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute God's will in relation to the world of men. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7). We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in the new birth, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ at the time of salvation (1 Cor. 12:13); indwelling, sanctifying, instructing, and empowering them for service (John 16:8-15; Rom. 8:9-16); and is the guarantee of their final inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14).

### **Man**

We believe that man was created by God in His own image for the purpose of enjoying fellowship with God (Deut. 6:4-5) and exercising dominion over God's created order (Gen. 1:26-28). We believe that man was originally in perfect fellowship with God, but fell from this position by disobeying God, resulting in death, which is both spiritual (separation from God) and physical (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 6:23). We believe that all mankind is affected by this sin in such a way that no human being by nature or through his own effort can achieve right standing before God (Rom. 3:9-20, 23).

## **Salvation**

We believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross, was raised from the dead on the third day, ascended bodily into the presence of God the Father, and now lives to intercede on our behalf (Luke 24:36-39; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Rom. 8:31-34; Eph. 1:20). We believe that this took place so that man can be reconciled to God and can have fellowship with God (2 Cor. 5:14-21). We believe that through repentance and personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, a person graciously receives right standing before God, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life (John 3:16; Ac. 17:30; Rom. 3:21-28, 10:9; Eph. 2:8-9). We believe the power of God assures this believer of his secure position in Christ (John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:28-39).

## **Christian Growth**

We believe that the believer is to live a life of increasing conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:8-16; 2 Pet. 1:3-11). This process of growth takes place through the exercise of faith, Bible study, prayer, meditation on the Word of God, obedience to Christ, fellowship with other Christians, and other spiritual disciplines (Psalms 119:9-16; Rom. 12:1-2; Col 2:6-7; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb 5:12-14, 10:24-25). We believe that every saved person is involved in a lifelong conflict --the new nature in Christ is set against the old nature--but adequate provision has been made for victory in this conflict through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. While the believer is never completely free from sin, the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Rom. 7:14-25, 8:1-17; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, and when given the opportunity he and his agents attempt to defeat Christians and thwart the mission of the church (Job 1:6-12; Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 2:10-11, 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:18). However, we believe Christians overcome Satan's schemes by applying Scriptural truth and exercising, by faith, the authority we have in Christ (Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Pet. 5:8-9; 1 John 5:4-5).

## **The Church**

We believe that all who place their faith in Christ are immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body (1 Cor. 12:12-13), of which Christ is the head (Eph.1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18). We believe that the purpose of the Body is to glorify God by world-wide proclamation that Jesus Christ is Savior, and by encouraging each believer to become progressively Christ-like through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:11-16). The Bible teaches that the members of this one spiritual Body are to associate themselves together in local churches (1 Cor. 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25). We believe that God has given special spiritual abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11), as well as spiritually gifted people to churches for the purpose of preparing believers for spiritual work (Eph. 4:11-12). It is essential for every believer to recognize and employ his spiritual abilities for the building up of the Body and the accomplishment of the work of God in the world (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). We believe Jesus Christ instituted two symbolic observances for the Body: baptism by immersion for believers (Matt. 28:19), and the Lord's Supper as a memorial of His death (Luke 22:14-20).

## **The Future**

We believe the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ could occur at any time (Matt. 24:29-44; Rev.19:11-20:6). We believe in the bodily resurrection of the saved and unsaved; the former to eternal fellowship with the Lord and the latter to eternal punishment and separation from Him (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 5:25-29; Rev.20:7-1).