

RIVERBEND BIBLE CHURCH

CONFESSION OF FAITH

THE SCRIPTURES

We believe the Bible in its original writings to be verbally (i.e. every word) and plerarily (i.e. in its totality) inspired by God. We deny that inspiration applies to any translation of the original languages. We believe that the Bible is our only infallible rule for faith and practice, profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.

We believe that the 66 books of the Canon are the total revelation of God's saving will, teaching us what we are to believe concerning God and what our responsibility is to do His will. We deny that God continues to give further special revelation.

THE GODHEAD

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful; He is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from His sight; He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all His creation but not limited by it. The one true God is infinite, immutable and independent. He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character. We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous, severe, good, loving and full of mercy. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of everything that has been made.

We believe that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is truly and eternally God, of one substance and equal with the Father. When the fullness of time came, He took upon Himself man's nature with its essential elements and common weaknesses, but without sin. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary of her substance, so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. This Jesus of Nazareth is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

We believe also that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son and therefore is neither made, created, nor begotten. He is the third person of the Holy Trinity, is of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and therefore is the true and eternal God.

MAN

Fall

We believe that man, created in God's image, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God but also the ability to choose sin so that they might fall from that state. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to will any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being completely corrupted and dead in sin, he is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself for conversion.

Election

We believe that God then showed His mercy by unconditionally electing a people for His name. We believe that God freely chose us for His own mysterious but gracious reasons and not because of any foreseen faith in us.

Being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, election comprehends all the means of salvation including regeneration, faith and repentance. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It utterly excludes boasting but promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and the active imitation of His free mercy.

Election encourages the use of prayer and preaching in the highest degree.

Election may be determined in all who believe the gospel, that it is the foundation of Christian assurance, and that to determine it in regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence. Election also demonstrates God's justice by passing over the non-elect, leaving them in the sinful state that they have freely chosen.

The Atonement

We believe that the Lord Jesus in perfect obedience offered Himself once and for all as a sacrifice to God for all those whom the Father gave Him. He has fully satisfied the justice of God, reconciling and redeeming His people through the cross and giving to them an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

All those for whom Christ died have their sins remitted and their guilt removed so that they pass from the bar of God's justice fully acquitted of all sins.

Regeneration

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born from above, that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind. The Holy Spirit frees us from our natural bondage to sin and by His grace alone enables us freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. Regeneration is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Spirit in tandem with His Word so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. The evidence of regeneration appears in the holy fruit of repentance and faith and newness of life.

Justification

We believe that justification is the great gospel blessing which Christ secures for all that believe in Him. In justifying sinners, God declares believers to be righteous because He has imputed to them the very righteousness of Christ and for His sake has forgiven all their sins.

Justification is an act of God's pure grace and in no way merited by man but received through faith alone in the perfect, sacrificial and atoning work of Christ. It is a permanent and settled state since God, who is Judge of all men, no longer regards believers as His enemies but as righteous in Christ. Therefore, we believe that we are justified by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone.

Sanctification

We believe that all who are justified are also sanctified. Sanctification is that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit involving our active and responsible participation by which we are made partakers of His holiness.

This work of God delivers us progressively from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to Him. While no man will ever achieve perfect sanctification in this life, we believe that it is the purpose of God's redemptive work to lead us into the ever-increasing practice of true holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Perseverance

We believe that all those whom God has effectually called, justified and sanctified can not fall from that state of grace but will certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved. This persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes true believers from superficial professors.

Our security rests solely in the preserving will and power of God who promises that nothing can ever separate his children from His love. Further, the Scripture never teaches that God preserves us apart from watchfulness, prayer and faith, but that our endurance will be in the struggle against sin, Satan and the world. We believe that the certainty of our deliverance does not rule out the indispensability of godly means and that we must take seriously the command of God to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because God is at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.

Eternal State

We believe that at death our bodies return to dust where they wait for their resurrection but that our souls, which neither die nor sleep, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous are confirmed in holiness, received into the glorious presence of God and wait for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the unrighteous are cast immediately into Hell where they remain in torment until the judgment of the last day. We deny that there is any other place reserved for us besides

Heaven and Hell

We believe that on the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise our dead bodies from the grave while those still living will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There will be a solemn and permanent separation of the wicked and the righteous. The unrighteous will be cast into endless punishment, while the righteous will enter the new heavens and new earth where there is endless joy.

THE CHURCH

Defined

We believe that the universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one body under Christ, her head and bridegroom.

We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, are baptized and are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. It regularly observes the sacraments of Christ, is governed by His laws, and exercises the gifts, rights and privileges invested in it by His Word.

Offices

We believe that there are two offices given to the church by her Lord consisting of Elders and Deacons. Elders, including Pastors, are given responsibility to oversee the congregation as those who will one day give an account to the Chief Shepherd. They are to receive honor, respect and frequent prayer from the church as men who have been set apart to care for the souls of the congregation. Deacons are those members of the church who are set apart to look after the welfare of the needs of the congregation and should also be honored for their work. It is incumbent upon the church to use great care in the selection of these officers in accordance with the qualifications, claims and duties of the Scripture.

Ordinances

We believe that Christ has given two holy and solemn sacraments to His Church: baptism and communion. These ordinances are a constant reminder of His unfailing grace and matchless love. They are designed to strengthen the faith of the believer and bolster his assurance. As such, they are to be received soberly and only by those who have properly discerned the spiritual realities they signify by placing their full confidence in the finished work of Christ.

We believe that baptism is a sign of the Holy Spirit's work in uniting us with Christ by washing away our sins and giving us new life. It is a most beautiful display of what takes place inwardly through the work of the Spirit in regeneration. We believe that gracious activity is best signified by immersion and is properly given to those who have repented of their sins and believed the gospel.

We also believe that communion is a sign of our Lord's atoning death for all who believe. In those elements we have a display of that great sacrifice which effected the salvation of His people. It is to be observed regularly and received with great joy because it signifies the marvelous and matchless love of our Lord. All those are welcomed to His table who can testify that their faith rests solely in that sacrifice. It is especially important for the true believer whose faith has been buffeted and needs again to hear the words of his Lord, "...this is my body which is broken for you...this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you." But, it is necessary for each member to examine himself, so that he does not partake in an unworthy or unbelieving manner.