

## **Basic Bible Teachings**

*Based upon the Firm Foundation Christian Church Statement of Christian Faith*

*All Scripture quoted in this document is from the New King James Version*

- A. Revelation and Inspiration**
- B. The Nature and Doctrine of God**
- C. Doctrine of Humanity**
- D. The Doctrine and Work of Christ**
- E. The Work of the Holy Spirit**
- F. Salvation and the Christian Life**
- G. The Church**
- H. The Ordinances of the Faith**
- I. Eschatology**
- J. Practical and Ethical Issues**

### **A. Revelation and Inspiration**

1. God reveals Himself in three ways, broadly speaking.
  - a. He is revealed through His creation. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).
  - b. He is revealed through our consciences. “their conscience also bearing witness” (Romans 2:15b).
  - c. He reveals Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Those who believe upon the Son receive the gift of eternal life. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
2. Scripture is the Word of God and is perfect because its Author, God Himself, inspired all of it.

- a. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16).
- b. "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21)
3. Comments/Questions?
  - a. God acts very personally and is available to each of us (Psalm 46:1).
  - b. The Bible contains 66 books; 39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament. We do not recognize the Apocrypha as those books were added later. We cannot add or subtract from what God has already revealed (Revelation 22:18-19).
  - c. Scripture is of greater authority than any tradition or experience.

## **B. The Nature and Doctrine of God**

1. The Bible reveals one God existing in Three Persons. We call this the Holy Trinity. "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Speaking of Jesus it is said: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Jesus Himself said: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). The Holy Spirit knows all things and therefore must be God also: "Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11b).
2. God is intimately involved with His creation. "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:29-30).
3. God is omnipresent, or all places at all times. "Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence" (Psalm 139:7)? The answer in Psalm 139 is obviously that we cannot hide from God.
4. God is omnipotent, or all powerful. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

5. God is omniscient; He knows all things. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28).
6. God is holy. "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be Holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15; Leviticus 11:44-45).
7. God is love. "God is love" (1 John 4:8b).
8. God is perfectly wise. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33).
9. God is graceful. He offers us blessings that we do not deserve. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).
10. God is merciful. He spares us judgment that we do deserve. "Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever" (Psalm 136:26).
11. God is good. "No one is good but One, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17b).
12. God is patient. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).
13. God is righteous and just. "He will judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice" (Psalm 72:2).
14. God is truthful. "Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).
15. God is faithful. "But God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 10:13b).
16. Comments/Questions?
  - a. The trinity is a divine mystery, but the Bible clearly teaches it.
  - b. These are the characteristics of God. They do not change, because God is unchangeable (James 1:17).
  - c. How have you seen these things in your life in the ways that God has worked in you?

### **C. Doctrine of Humanity**

1. God created men and women in His image and likeness. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27).
2. Adam and Eve were originally created without sin and enjoyed close fellowship with God. Their original sin was eating the forbidden fruit, but the root cause was pride leading to disobedience (Genesis 3).
3. Because of their sin, both physical and spiritual death entered into the world. "Just as through one man death entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 5:12, 6:23a).
4. Further, we are totally depraved and hostile towards God. "As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God'" (Romans 3:10-11).
5. We are therefore totally dependent upon God's grace and mercy for our eternal salvation. "So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16).

### **D. The Doctrine and Work of Christ**

1. Jesus Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit without a human father and was born of the virgin Mary, "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20).
2. In his Incarnation, Jesus was "without sin" (Hebrews 4:15c). During this time, He was both fully God and fully man. Jesus Himself said: "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30). The Spirit of God also testifies that "Jesus has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2).
3. Jesus offered Himself up for sinners once and for all, with the continuing result that all who place their faith in Him might be justified by their faith. It is through Christ Jesus, "whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that

He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26).

4. The redemption price of your soul is “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:19). It is the basis of the New Covenant, and the salvation of the believer (Luke 22:20).
5. Jesus died for all men and women and His sacrifice is sufficient for all. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2).
6. Some, however, will not choose God, and will be left to reap the consequences of their sin, “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21). God does not damn people to hell, but in His permissive will, people are allowed to continue in their sin and proceed there.
7. Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead. “He is risen, as He said” (Matthew 28:6), “and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). By His resurrection, the future glorification of believers is guaranteed. “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20).
8. Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father interceding and advocating for His people today. “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1b).

## **E. The Work of the Holy Spirit**

1. Jesus said of the Spirit: “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11). Notice here (and elsewhere), that the Holy Spirit is identified as a ‘He’, so we are dealing with a Divine Person and not just a force. The Holy Spirit possesses the divine attributes.
2. It is the Holy Spirit who guides the Christian into the way of truth. Just as God the Son points us to God the Father, God the Holy Spirit points us to God the Son—Jesus Christ. Jesus said of the Spirit that “...He will guide you into all truth...” and “He will glorify Me...” (John 16:13-14).
3. The Holy Spirit guarantees the salvation of the believer. Because salvation is guaranteed by God, it cannot be lost. “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14). The purchased possession is the heavenly inheritance that the believer has which was bought by Jesus’ blood.
4. The Holy Spirit empowers the Christian to bring forth fruit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22).
5. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, given by God in order that they might serve others. “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:7).
6. It is no coincidence that right in the middle of Paul’s extended teaching on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, we find 1 Corinthians 13—perhaps the greatest discourse on love in the Bible. The point is that spiritual gifts are given to be used in love for the benefit of others, not ourselves.

7. There are some gifts—apostleship, prophecy, miracles, healings, tongues, and interpretation of tongues—that were given temporarily in that day to establish the truth of the New Testament message and the authority of the Apostles (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, 14:21-22; Ephesians 2:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19). For instance, the need for prophecy ceased with the completed canon of Scripture because the function of it was to be foundational for the Christian message prior to its completion (Ephesians 2:20; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

#### **F. Salvation and the Christian Life**

1. The Bible records the teaching of Jesus that “...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name to all nations...” (Luke 24:47). “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). When Thomas the disciple asked for clarification, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’” (John 14:6). The gift of eternal life is a “free gift” for those who believe in faith that Jesus is God, able and willing to save (Romans 5:18).
2. God’s sovereign election is unconditional. Jesus said: “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16). Scripture teaches that believers were chosen “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4b). This means that the work of salvation is God’s work, and not our own doing. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
3. God also promises to keep believers. Therefore it is not possible for anyone to lose the gift of salvation that God gave them. Speaking of His sheep (believers), Jesus said: “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28).

4. There are three main aspects relating to salvation. For the Christian, they can be broken down into past, present, and future.
  - a. The first is justification, which is past tense. This refers to the moment of salvation. The Apostle Paul writes of believers “being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).
  - b. The second is sanctification, which is present tense. This is the process by which the Christian is instructed and empowered by God to seek to live a holy life set apart for God’s service and worthy of being called a follower of Jesus. Jesus “appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16b). Because of our sin nature, we can never reach perfection in this life, but we should strive to do after the manner of the Apostle Paul: “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” (Philippians 3:12).
  - c. The third is glorification, which is yet future. “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Jesus promised: “Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19b). Ultimately, the believer will have eternal life in a glorified state in the very presence of God (Romans 8:28-30).

## **G. The Church**

1. The church was ordained by Jesus Christ Himself as a public witness to the fact that He is God, Savior, and Lord. “On this rock I will build My church” (Matthew 16:18b). The rock is the statement of Peter professing Him to be the Son of God two verses earlier. The word for church refers to a public gathering for a particular purpose. The church is to be focused upon Jesus Christ. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

2. Obedient Christians do not neglect private prayer and worship. Neither do they neglect public prayer and worship. We are to come together regularly as a church to worship God and support one other in the journey. “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).
3. There are two divinely ordained offices in the church, deacons and elders. “If a man desires the position of a bishop...likewise deacons...” (1 Timothy 3:1, 8). The word bishop can also be translated overseer. In other places, we find the term elder. One of the primary gifts of such a man is pastor, and we often use that to refer to this office as well. However, the most important things are having a love for God, a heart for people, and biblical character (1 Timothy 3).
4. Every member of the local church is part of the ministry of the church. While spiritual gifts may vary, we are all called to fulfill our ministry. “For in fact the body is not one member but many” (1 Corinthians 12:14).

#### **H. The Ordinances of the faith**

1. There are two divinely instituted ordinances for the church age. We will define an ordinance as a direct New Testament command of Christ given to all believers.
2. The first is baptism. Part of the Christ-given mission of the church in making disciples is “baptizing them” (Matthew 28:19). Peter reaffirms this by saying to the multitudes: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Repentance is the inward change that takes place at the moment of salvation. Baptism is the outward reflection of that inward change. The Holy Spirit also enters the believer at the moment of salvation.
3. The second is Communion. Jesus instituted this ordinance at the Last Supper. “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to

them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me’” (Luke 22:19).

## **I. Eschatology**

1. Eschatology, or the study of the last things, is best understood within the framework of dispensations. A dispensation is a period of human history in which God deals with men and women in a particular way.
2. Bible scholars have come up with anywhere from six to fourteen dispensations. There are two main ones that aid us in understanding God’s revelation in Scripture. The first is the Old Testament Dispensation, during which the Law reigned supreme and people looked forward to the coming Messiah. “What purpose does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19). The second is the New Testament Dispensation. “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2a). This is the age of grace we live in now. In the Old Testament, God worked through Israel. In the New Testament, God works through His church.
3. Salvation and eternal life has always been by grace through faith, regardless of dispensation. “The just shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17b).
4. At some point in the future, there will take place the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 24:15-21; Revelation 19:11-20:10). “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matthew 24:36).
5. The believer enters into the presence of Christ at the moment of death. Jesus Himself promises the faithful that on the day of their death: “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
6. In contrast to the believer who has eternal life in the presence of God, the unbeliever is “condemned” to an eternity apart from Him (John 3:16-18). Jesus describes hell as the place where there is “the fire that shall never be quenched” (Mark 9:43). Hell is also a place of conscious

torment, where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 8:12).

#### **J. Practical and Ethical Issues**

1. The Christian is called to a holy life pleasing to God, which should be the natural response of gratefulness for all He has done for us. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).
2. The Christian is to be subject to the human governing authorities, except in cases that clearly violate biblical commands. “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Romans 13:1).
3. The marriage covenant was instituted by God to be between one man and one woman. Sex is the covenant sign of marriage, and was given to be enjoyed within this context alone. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Although people have violated this command through the ages, God’s design for marriage has never changed (Ephesians 5:22-33).
4. Divorce was not in the original plan. However, because of sin, it is permitted in cases of adultery or desertion. Jesus said that “whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32). We also find it written that “if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases” (1 Corinthians 7:15). In extreme cases of abuse or neglect, practical desertion is the result, and such cases belong under the category of desertion set forth here.
5. An unborn baby is a person. Therefore, abortion is murder. “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb...Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed” (Psalm 139:14-16).
6. Believers are called to be good stewards of the time God has given them on this earth. “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as

- wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16).
7. Believers are called to be good stewards of the natural and spiritual gifts that they have received from God. “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).
  8. Believers are called to be good stewards of money. “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches” (Luke 16:10-11)? “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10a). Money itself is neither good nor bad. Loving it too much is the problem, and both rich and poor people fall into this sin.
  9. Tithing is not a command to the New Testament believer. The rule for giving is: “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).