

Our Beliefs

In today's culture, sifting through the different churches, denominations, practices, and beliefs can be frustrating and confusing. At Oregon City Christian we try to be as clear as possible about what is essential to faith in Jesus Christ, and what is not. Our faith, ministry, and practice, are defined by these beliefs. Our goal is not to be right, but to be Biblical. Our desire is not to be in conflict with others, but to have unity on the essentials of our salvation and faith. There are three statements that help define our character when it comes to biblical truth and faith:

In essential beliefs - Unity (Eph. 4:4-6)

In non-essentials - Liberty (Romans 14:1)

In all things - Love (1 Cor. 13:2)

This, of course, raises the question: "What are the essential doctrines or beliefs of the Christian faith?" There are a number of distinctive practices and beliefs that set followers of Christ apart from each other. It wouldn't be wise or loving to ignore or dismiss those differences. There is something worth learning from all of them. Some choose to emphasize holiness, others grace, while still others express loyalty to a certain historical leader or a particular form of church government. Like the pieces of a mosaic each part adds to the whole of our faith and practice. Historically, however, there has always been a broad area of consensus and agreement regarding basic Christian belief. There have been a number of attempts to express this consensus in writing. Generally these efforts tend to focus on seven foundational beliefs.

Seven Essentials

ABOUT GOD

We believe that God is tri-une. One in essence, yet existing as three distinct Persons. Each person being fully and completely God.

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God, yet distinct in their roles. As one, God is constantly operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes. (Genesis 1:1, 26, & 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

We believe in the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, and in his full humanity. Born of a virgin, died for our sins, risen bodily from the dead, he will return personally and visibly in power and glory.

Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father, fully God and also fully human. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. Jesus lived a

sinless human life, and, by the will of the Father, gave himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. Jesus rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate his power and authority over sin, death, and Satan. He is the only mediator between God and Man. There is no other name by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). After his resurrection, he ascended to Heaven's glory, and one day he will return personally and visibly, in power and glory. (Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; Colosians 1:15; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13)

ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS

We believe in the historical creation of man.

People are made in and bear the image of God. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude and practice of disobedience toward God called sin. Sin separates people from God and ultimately leads to eternal death. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2)

ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who indwells God's people and empowers them to live for Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is "the other comforter" who dwells in the hearts of believers, convincing them of the truth of Jesus' teaching and helping them to do what is right in the eyes of God. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth, and Christian growth are all the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence is the guarantee of our relationship with God, and the source of Christian unity. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; Galatians 5:25)

ABOUT THE BIBLE

We believe the bible to be wholly and completely the word of God.

The Bible is God's word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth and authority for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

ABOUT SALVATION

We believe in salvation through Jesus Christ alone.

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ, the payment for our sin and God's offer of forgiveness, can anyone be saved. When we turn from our self-ruled life and put our faith in Jesus, we are saved. Eternal life begins the

moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (John 1:12; 14:6; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1)

ABOUT ETERNITY

We believe that people were created to exist forever.

We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. (John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9)

A FEW DISTINCTIVES

Every church has some unique values and beliefs that shape and mark its identity. These are things, which we consider to be important because they mark who we are and why we feel God has called us together to serve and worship Him. For us, these include:

We are a non-denominational Fellowship - Our church is not governed by, or obligated to, any outside church hierarchy or leadership. We are an independent fellowship of believers. Our leadership team consists of elders who have been called by Christ and recognized by our church family for the purpose of serving and directing the life and ministry of Oregon City Christian. The fellowship of Christian Churches was formed out of a desire to simply be genuinely and authentically "Christian" - nothing more, and certainly nothing less. Because of that, we choose to focus on what followers of Christ can readily agree upon as being Biblical and essential to the faith. Our primary concern is not tradition, relevance, or popularity, but biblical teaching and truth.

We practice baptism by immersion - In the New Testament, whenever someone made a decision to follow Christ, they marked their response to the Gospel by identifying with Jesus in the waters of baptism. Immersion was the practice of the New Testament church. The word "baptism" is simply the Bible's word for immersion and means "to dip or immerse."

We observe the Lord's Supper every week - We are rather simplistic about things. Whenever possible, we want to follow the practices of Christians in the Bible. The New Testament is clear that whenever the believers came together for worship on the first day of the week, they had communion. It is our responsibility and privilege to do the same.

We celebrate that Jesus Christ transforms lives! - We haven't arrived yet. We are all still in the process of becoming more like Christ, and yet we are a new creation in him. Sometimes it can be a pretty rough road, but we know this: when Jesus comes to reign and rule in someone's life, that person is never the same. We want to point people to Jesus, who heals the broken, rescues the lost, and sets captives free. In all we do, we seek to connect real life, with real faith, in order that we might have real change in Christ.