

# Statement of Faith and Belief

The First Baptist Church, in accordance with historic Baptist tradition, holds to Salvation by Grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ, Believers Baptism by Immersion, and the Priesthood of Believers. We also affirm the following foundations of the faith:

## The Scriptures

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit. They are authoritative and inerrant; making them profitable for doctrine, discipline, correction, and discipleship. The Bible is the standard by which all human conduct and creeds should be tried. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21, Proverbs 30:5)

## God

There is only one true and living God who, being perfect in all His attributes, is eternal and is the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe and everything therein. In His infinite wisdom, power, and knowledge, He is able to be present at all times and places, not bound by space and time. He is supreme in His Holiness, Righteousness, Love, Mercy, and Justice. The triune God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three persons with distinct personal attributes, but one, without division, in nature, essence, and being. (Genesis 1:1, Proverbs 15:3, Luke 1:37, Psalm 139:1-10, Isaiah 6:1-11, Revelation 4:1-11, James 1:17, Psalm 100:1-5, Genesis 18:25, Romans 9:13-33, Matthew 28:19)

## God the Father

God as Father reigns with perfect and providential care over His creation; the universe, His creatures in it, and the flow of human history – all according to His eternal purposes. His loving grace, provided through Jesus Christ and available to all, secures for the believer in Christ direct access to Him. (Genesis 1:1, 2:7, Exodus 6:2-3, Psalm 19:1-3, Matthew 7:11, 23:9, John 4:24, 14:6-13, 1 John 5:7)

## God the Son

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and was sinless during His earthly life. He was crucified on the cross, thus making provision for the redemption of humankind from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the only Mediator between God and humankind. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and complete His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord as well as our model for abundant life. (John 3:16, 17, 10:10, 15:20, Romans 6:9-11, Acts 4:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21).

## God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He inspired the writing of the Holy Scriptures and enables humankind to understand its truth. He exalts Christ, convicts people of sin, and imparts righteousness. He calls humankind to the Savior and effects regeneration, which leads to salvation. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer until the day of final redemption. The Holy Spirit bears witness to our own spirits and assures us that we are forever children of God. He enlightens and empowers the body of believers in worship, evangelism, discipleship, and service. (John 15:16, 17, 26, John 16:12-14, Acts 5:32, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:16-18)

## Humankind

Humankind, created by God in His own image, is the crowning work of His creation. Humankind was created innocent of sin and endowed with freedom of choice by the Creator. However, humankind chose to sin through the temptation of Satan, thus causing humankind to be sinful and separated from God. Now one can come to God only through believing in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ as personal Savior. All attempts by humankind to reach God through its own good works are in vain. Jesus is the only way to the Father. (Genesis 1:27, John 3:16, 17, 14:6, Romans 3:10, 23, 5:8; 10:9, Ephesians 2:1-10, James 2:10)

## **Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Regeneration, the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through the conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sin's consequence bestowed upon those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart for God's purposes. The believer is enabled to grow toward moral and spiritual maturity through the power and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification should continue throughout the person's life.

Glorification is the final blessed and eternal state of the redeemed as they receive their reward in heaven.

Salvation is permanent for all genuine believers. Being accepted by God in Christ and sanctified by His Holy Spirit, believers will never fall away from the state of grace and will, therefore, persevere to the end. Believers can fall into sin and grieve the Holy Spirit, which may bring negative consequences/judgments to their lives and hinder the cause of Christ. Nevertheless, they are forever kept by God's power and love in and through Christ. (Titus 3:4-5, Ephesians 2:19, Acts 16:31, 13:39, Romans 1:7, 3:24, 4:6,7, 5:9-11, John 3:3,5,16, Galatians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 3:7-11, 5:19, Romans 6:1-4, John 5:24, 6:39-40, 17:12, Hebrews 10:14, Romans 8:29-30, 37-39, 11:29, 2 Timothy 1:12, 2:13, 1 John 5:13, Jude 24-25)

## **The Church**

The church in its widest sense includes all believers in Christ throughout the ages. The church is manifested visibly in the local body of baptized believers who covenant together to worship, observe the ordinances, share the gospel, and help disciple and equip believers for Christian service. (Matthew 28:19-20, Ephesians 5:23, 29, Colossians 1:18, 24, 1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Peter 1:4, 5, 9, 10)

## **Believers Baptism**

We believe that baptism illustrates Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and the new life in Christ experienced by the believer. Baptism does not impart salvation. It does, however, demonstrate obedience to Christ and serves as a witness to the fact of each believer's salvation. Our church practices baptism by immersion and is offered to all who have made a personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ. (Matthew 3:16, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 41, Acts 8:39 – 39, Romans 6:3-4)

## **Evangelism and Missions**

Evangelism is the duty and privilege of every believer and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by other missionary efforts. Our church sponsors local, national and international outreach. (Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16-17, Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 3:9)

## **The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper reminds us of the death of Jesus Christ, who died for the sins of humankind. Only those who believe and accept Jesus as personal Savior may partake of the Lord's Supper. We observe "open communion," meaning anyone who has accepted Christ as Savior and Lord is invited to take communion with us. (Matthew 26:26-28, Luke 22:19-20)

## **The Family**

The family structure, ordained of God, consists of persons related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption. God's design is that a man and woman may choose to be joined in marriage or remain single. Marriage is the joining together of one man and one woman for a lifetime commitment. It provides the only means of sexual expression and procreation acceptable to the Lord in the Scriptures. The husband and wife have responsibilities of love and respect toward and for each other in their unity. At the instant of conception, children are a blessing from God. Parents should demonstrate and teach spiritual and moral values, raising their children in love based on biblical truths. Conversely, cultural practices such as sex outside of marriage, cohabitation, adultery, or homosexuality are in direct opposition to sound biblical teaching. (Genesis 1:28, 2:15-18, Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Matthew 19:4-6, 8-9, Hebrews 13:4, Romans 1:24-27, Malachi 2:14-16, I Corinthians 7:15, Ephesians 5:22-33)

## **Human Destiny**

Jesus Christ will return visibly. At that time He will raise the dead and judge all people. Believers will enjoy an eternal state of blessedness in heaven while unbelievers will experience eternal separation from God in hell. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord. (Matthew 24:1-25, 46, Matthew 26:64, I Thessalonians 4:13, 5:11, Titus 2:13, 1 Peter 3:8-13)