

GRACE POINT CHURCH DOCTRINE

WHAT DOES GRACE POINT CHURCH BELIEVE?

Our doctrines represent the foundational beliefs of Christian orthodoxy and capture the basic teachings of Christian theology. These doctrines help shape and guide all that we do as Grace Point Church.

1. THE TRI-UNE GOD

Key Points:

- God eternally exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Each person is fully God.
- There is one God.
- God sovereignly rules and reigns over all things.
- We should submit to, adore, enjoy, and glorify God.

Statement:

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 3:16–17, Matthew 28:19

2. THE BIBLE: REVELATION

Key Points:

- God has revealed himself through his creation, through Jesus, and through the Scriptures.
- To disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.
- The Bible is inerrant and the ultimate authority in all things.
- We should joyfully read, study, and apply God's word to our lives.

Statement:

God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both records and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16–17, 2 Peter 1:20–21 & John 8:31–32

3. THE CREATION OF HUMANITY

Key Points:

- Men and women are created, dependent beings.
- Men and women are made in God's image to be God's agents.
- God's image remains present, yet marred by sin, in all humankind.
- Men and women are equal as image-bearers of God and accessibility to God.
- Men and women are created to complement one another by assuming distinctive roles in the family and church.

Statement:

We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles, which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the people of God. The distinctive role of eldership within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption; and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

Scripture: Genesis 1:27–31, Genesis 2:18–25, Ephesians 5:22–33, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Romans 16:1–4

4. THE FALL

Key Points:

- We are sinners by nature and by choice.
- Sin corrupts every aspect of our lives.
- The just penalty for our sin is death.
- We should earnestly seek to rid our lives of sin.

Statement:

We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan’s temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God’s own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

Scripture Genesis: 3:1–7, Romans 5:12,19 & Romans 3:10–12

5. THE PLAN OF GOD

Key Points:

- God’s people were unconditionally chosen to experience his grace before the foundation of the world.
- God does the work of saving and cleansing those who put their hope in Jesus.
- All people are called to repent and believe.

Statement:

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them — all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3–10 Revelation 5:9–10 & Romans 8:29–30

6. THE GOSPEL

Key Points:

- The gospel is news, not advice.
- The gospel is the historically true story of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension.
- God uses the gospel to transform us.
- Both Christians and non-Christians need the gospel.

Statement:

We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God's very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is Christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is "Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised"). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:1–5, 1 Corinthians 15:1–8 & Romans 10:9–13

7. THE REDEMPTION OF CHRIST

Key Points:

- Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Scriptures.
- Jesus is fully God and fully man.
- Jesus lived a life of perfect, sinless obedience to God's will.
- Jesus died as a substitute for us and paid the penalty for our sin.
- Jesus physically rose from his grave, breaking the power of Satan, sin, and death.
- Jesus is the only way to salvation.
- Jesus is King over all creation.

Statement:

We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God's sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him. Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God; our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

Scripture: John 1:14, Matthew 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Timothy 2:5, Matthew 28:18 & Romans 3:21–27

8. THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

Key Points:

- Jesus' death on the cross is credited to all who trust in him as full payment for their sins.
- Jesus' obedience in his sinless life is credited to all who trust in him as their righteousness and acceptance with God.
- Justification is a free gift.
- The gift of justification rightly motivates us toward obedience.

Statement:

We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

Scripture: Romans 3:21–31, Titus 2:11–14 & Titus 3:3–8

9. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Key Points:

- The Holy Spirit is actively working before, during, and after salvation.
- The Holy Spirit is with and in all followers of Jesus Christ, serving as a 'down payment' of our inheritance and guiding us in sanctification.
- The Holy Spirit often works through the gifts of his people.
- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and not an "it" or "force".

Statement:

We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the "other" Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, and in him they are baptized into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:13–14, John 14:26, John 16:8–14, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16 & 1 Corinthians 12:1–11

10. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Key Points:

- The Kingdom of God is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world.
- The Kingdom of God is already present but not fully realized.
- The Kingdom of God was initiated by Jesus and will be completed in the new heaven and new earth.
- The Kingdom of God continues through Jesus' people actively demonstrating and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom.

Statement:

We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it; rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

Scripture: Mark 1:14–15, Matthew 5:13–16, Matthew 22:36–40, Galatians 6:10, Colossians 1:15–19 & Revelation 21:1–5

11. THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD - THE CHURCH

Key Points:

- God has chosen to continue his work on earth through the church.
- Each local church is to be a sign and an agent of God's kingdom.
- Jesus died not just to reconcile us to God, but to reconcile us with each other.

Statement:

We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

Scripture: Ephesians 1:16–23, Ephesians 5:25, Matthew 28:18–20, John 13:34 & Ephesians 2:14-16, 19-22

12. THE SACRAMENTS: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Key Points:

- Baptism is the sign of initiation into God's family.
- The Lord's Supper (Communion) is the sign of covenant renewal for followers of Jesus Christ.
- While both are commanded in Scripture, neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper are necessary for salvation.
- At Grace Point Church we practice "believer's baptism" by full submersion.*

Statement:

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

**At Grace Point Church, we practice "believer's baptism," believing that baptism is appropriately administered only to those who give a thoughtful and sincere profession of faith in Jesus Christ. In other words, we believe that baptism should come after faith in Jesus, rather than before. For this reason, we will not baptize infants or small children that are unable to make a thoughtful and sincere profession of faith.*

Scripture: Matthew 28:18–20, Romans 6:3–5, Matthew 26:26–28 & 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

13. THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

Key Points:

- There will be a physical resurrection of both the saved and the condemned.
- Those who die in their sins apart from Christ will experience eternal conscious punishment in hell.
- God will renew creation and his people will joyfully live forever in the new heaven and new earth.

Statement:

We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

Scripture: Revelation 19:11–16, 1 Corinthians 15:20–26 & Revelation 21:1–5