

# Table of Contents

## Who We Are

1. Vision.....	pg. 1
2. Mission Statement.....	pg. 1
3. Statement of Faith.....	pg. 2
4. Core Values.....	pg. 3

## What We Believe

1. Confession of Christ.....	pg. 4
2. What is the Church.....	pg. 5
3. Theological Foundations.....	pg. 8
• Christ Alone.....	pg. 9
• Grace Alone.....	pg. 13
• Faith Alone.....	pg. 15
• Scripture Alone.....	pg. 24
• Glory Alone.....	pg. 28

## How We Live

1. Growing Spiritually.....	pg. 29
2. Living Authentically.....	pg. 32
3. Participating In His Purposes.....	pg. 37

<b>In Closing.....</b>	<b>pg. 43</b>
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# Vision

Building A Vibrant Church In A Pivotal City,  
In Order To Perpetuate His Name For Generations.

*I will perpetuate Your memory through all generations;  
therefore the nations will praise You for ever and ever.*

*Psalm 45:17*

# Mission Statement

Honoring the Greatness of Jesus Christ  
by Growing Spiritually, Living Authentically,  
and Participating in His Purposes.

# Statement of Faith

*We believe the Bible to be the exclusive Word of God. Its content, written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the primary authority in our lives.*

*We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

*We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.*

*We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful humanity, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.*

*We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life and is empowered for ministry with spiritual gifts.*

*We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.*

*We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in Christ.*

# Core Values

God's love demonstrated on the cross compels us to love others as He loves us.

(Romans 15:1-6; Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 John 4:7-12)

The power of authentic faith in our daily lives is paramount in building God's kingdom.

(1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; James 1:22-27; 1 Peter 2:11-12)

Every believer is uniquely gifted and specifically stationed to serve God in ministry.

(1 Corinthians 12:27; Hebrews 10:19-25; 1 Peter 2:4-9,)

The presence of Christ makes a church gathering compelling and worthwhile.

(Deuteronomy 12:7; 1 Corinthians 5:4; Hebrews 12:28)

God has ordained the local church as a primary vehicle for spiritual growth and expansion.

(Matthew 16:17-19; Ephesians 3:7-11; Hebrews 13:17)

God's family design is a vital instrument in creating disciples from generation to generation.

(Psalm 128; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

Sound theology is clearly and proportionally Biblical.

(John 20:31; Ephesians 4:11-15; 2 Peter 2:14-18)

# What We Believe

The following section is an overview of what we believe about Christ, the Church, and our Theological Foundations.

## Confession of Christ

The rock on which Christ builds a church that prevails against evil is a clear and Biblical understanding of who He is.

*<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”*

*<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by My Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”  
(Matthew 16:13-18)*

While we agree with both the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, our most concise confession of Christ is:

**Jesus Christ is the God of Israel who became human to bring about the salvation He promised in the Old Testament.**

# What Is The Church?

Three metaphors are used in The New Testament to describe the Church: 1) A Memorial 2) A Body 3) A Temple

## A Memorial to the Truth

*<sup>14</sup> Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, <sup>15</sup> if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.*

*<sup>16</sup> Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:14-16)*

Early in their history, ancient cities would build an architectural structure to memorialize the values and beliefs that support its existence. These structures existed to communicate the crucial truths of a culture for generations. In 1806, the University of Georgia erected the Arch. This famous three-pillar structure has served as a reminder of UGA's foundational values of wisdom, justice, and moderation.

Paul compares the Church to such a structure, a memorial to remind generations of the awesome wonder of Jesus. The Church is to be a strong and visible reminder of this truth, demonstrating not only what we believe, but also how we live out those beliefs.

# The Body of Christ

*<sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Romans 12:4-6)*

*<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ... <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.  
(1 Corinthians 12:12,27)*

*<sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.  
(Ephesians 4:15-16)*

The New Testament writers repeatedly used the imagery of a body to describe a church. This emphasizes that each one of us is equally important and necessary for a church to accomplish its mission. Our contribution is vital for the church to fulfill God's purposes.

Like a body, the church is made up of diverse parts that perform unique functions. When each of these works together, the church grows and thrives. We each have a role to play in the church growing and maturing in a healthy manner. Everybody matters!

# The Dwelling Where God Lives by the Spirit

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of His household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.*

*In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)*

A pivotal dynamic found throughout the Old Testament was God's presence dwelling among His people. Initially, God dwelt among the Israelites in a structure called the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8). Hundreds of years later, after they possessed their own land, the Hebrew people built a temple to be the permanent dwelling place of God.

The temple was a place where God's people would gather to worship Him, behold His beauty, and seek Him during challenging circumstances. It was a place where those outside God's covenant could come to experience His presence and power (2 Chronicles 6).

The Bible unveils a God who wants to dwell powerfully amongst His people whenever and wherever they meet. We desire that church gatherings be a place where God's people join to worship Him and experience Him in significant ways. Our hope is also that those who do not know Christ will experience God's presence in a convincing way that authenticates the claims of the Gospel.



# Theological Foundations

There are many Biblical truths that contribute to spiritual health. While we emphasize many of these, there are five truths that are essential and foundational in our church. These truths arose from the Protestant Reformation and are known as “The Five Solas”—the word “*sola*” coming from the Latin word “*alone*.”

1. Christ Alone
2. Grace Alone
3. Faith Alone
4. Scripture Alone
5. Glory Alone

The first three of these clarify how salvation is experienced, while the last two clarify how salvation is lived out.

# Christ Alone

Christ Alone teaches that Jesus is the only source for salvation. Jesus' name means "God Saves" – because that is who He is and what He does. In accordance with the Scriptures, we believe that God became human in Jesus, and through His death, salvation is available to all who believe.

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... <sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14)*

*<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:15-17)*

*<sup>3</sup> The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (Hebrews 1:3)*

When watching football on TV, we are seeing the exact image of that game on a screen in our home. We experience a spectacle happening far away, because its exact likeness has been transferred to a plane that makes its content clear. That's how the New Testament describes Jesus. He is the

eternal, infinite, invisible God, transferred to the temporal, finite, material plane of genuine humanity.

God chose the medium of genuine humanity to clarify what He's like, and to bring salvation. God became flesh in Christ to fulfill the promises He made in the Old Testament—to decisively remove our sin and make relationship with Him equally accessible to all.

Several passages in the Old Testament anticipate God bringing these two aspects of salvation to pass:

*<sup>25</sup> I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more. (Isaiah 43:25)*

*<sup>6</sup> He says: "It is too small a thing for You to be My servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make You a light for the Gentiles, that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)*

*<sup>34</sup> No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)*

*<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. (Ezekiel 36:25)*

*<sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up*

*to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.” (Micah 4:2)*

Scripture uses a pertinent analogy to communicate what it’s like to have our sins forgiven: wiping out an overwhelming financial debt (Colossians 2:14). The burden of such a state can be debilitating. If some sincere soul offers to help, but doesn’t have enough money to do so, (or even worse—they’re in the same situation) despite their sincerity, they can’t help.

**Two things are necessary for salvation from this dilemma:**

- 1) Sufficient resources to pay off the debt
- 2) Converting those resources into the appropriate currency

For instance, a million-dollar balance owed in America could not be retired by a million-dollars’ worth of euros, unless those euros were converted into dollars—the appropriate currency.

**We need the same two things to wipe away our sin:**

- 1) One whose moral value is sufficient to completely wipe out humanity’s sin
- 2) This value must be converted into “human currency”

God brought about these two dynamics when he became incarnate in Christ. God’s holiness and divinity were converted into human currency, so to speak, in order to pay off the entire debt of human sin through His death. That’s why salvation is in Christ Alone—no one else.

Passages in the New Testament that emphasize salvation through Christ Alone include:

<sup>6</sup> *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* (John 14:6)

<sup>12</sup> *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.* (Acts 4:12)

<sup>3</sup> *This is good, and pleases God our Savior,* <sup>4</sup> *who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* <sup>5</sup> *For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,* <sup>6</sup> *who gave Himself as a ransom for all people.* (1 Timothy 2:3-6)

<sup>9</sup> *... He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.* (Hebrews 5:9)

<sup>1</sup> *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* <sup>2</sup> *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2)

# Grace Alone

The doctrine of Grace Alone is unique to Christianity. No other religion teaches anything like it. While other religions may emphasize that grace contributes to salvation, Christianity teaches that salvation is provided by Grace Alone. God's actions, not our own, save us. In every other religion, the key to salvation is the word "DO." In Christianity, the key to salvation is the word "DONE." It is 100% dependent on God's actions and 0% dependent on ours.

The central theme of the Bible is *God Saves*: He alone provides salvation. This theme is foreshadowed in several Old Testament stories. In the story of humanity's fall, God provides animal skins to cover Adam and Eve's shame (Genesis 3:21). In a defining moment of Abraham's life, God provides a lamb to be sacrificed in the place of his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-4). In the Exodus account, Israel is delivered from slavery by the miraculous actions of God alone (Exodus 14:13-14).

There are several other illustrations found throughout the Bible where God provides salvation for His people independent of their effort or merit. This theme culminates Jesus—whose name literally means *God Saves*.

Our salvation is unconditional because of Grace Alone. It does not communicate "If you do, then He will," but "because He did, therefore you can." Passages that expound the doctrine of Grace Alone include:

*<sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)*

*<sup>22</sup> There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*  
(Romans 3:22-24)

*<sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*  
(2 Corinthians 8:9)

*<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)*

*<sup>9</sup> He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. (2 Timothy 1:9)*

*<sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)*

*<sup>9</sup> But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*  
(Hebrews 2:9)

# Faith Alone

God provides salvation by grace. The only way to receive this unconditional gift is through faith. We do not earn it by compliance to the Law. We cannot endear ourselves to God by good deeds. Salvation becomes ours through Faith Alone. Faith is the instrument by which we receive salvation, not something that causes salvation.

*28 Then they asked Him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent."  
(John 6:28–29)*

*26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. (Galatians 3:26)*

*12 In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12)*

*9 ...and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. (Philippians 3:9)*

Salvation by Grace Alone through Faith Alone is counter-intuitive and for this reason, often abrasive. When clearly understood, it accentuates at least three liberating spiritual dynamics: dependence, hope, and assurance.

## 1. Dependence

A man is sliding off a cliff. As he is falling to his doom, he grabs a branch and clings to it for dear life. In desperation he



cries out, “Can anyone hear me? Can anyone save me?” He hears a voice reply, “I am here and can save you, but first, you must let go of the branch.” The man then yells out again, “Can anyone else hear me? Can anyone else save me?”

Dependence is uncomfortable. We pride ourselves on being self-reliant and dependent on no one. While self-reliance seems healthy, it is actually toxic to our spiritual lives. In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus taught a parable about those who are “*confident in their own righteousness and look down on everyone else.*” In this story, Jesus contrasts a religious leader with a despised tax collector. The religious leader is proud of his own works, while the tax collector mourns his condition and asks God for mercy. Jesus points out that the humble sinner went away right with God, rather than the pious religious leader.

Some of the many passages that point this out include:

*<sup>28</sup> For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. (Romans 3:28)*

*<sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. <sup>5</sup> However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)*

*<sup>16</sup> Know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)*

## 2. Hope

Salvation by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, puts all of humanity on a level playing field. All are totally dependent on God to provide salvation. This truth makes salvation a possibility for anyone, accessible to all regardless of who they are or what they've done. No one deserves grace. It is not works, but humility that is catalytic in experiencing salvation.

In Matthew 20:1-16, Jesus shares another story that illustrates why salvation by grace through faith can be abrasive. In this parable, a man who owns a vineyard hires several workers to help with the harvest for an entire workday. Later that morning, he hires more workers. He hires several more workers at noon. At 3:00, he hires more workers, and at 5:00, with very little time left in the day, he hires even more.

At the end of the day, the vineyard owner does something unexpected: he pays those who worked for just a few hours the same wage as those who worked hard all day. Those who worked all day object that he is being unfair. The owner responds that he is not being unfair, but true to his word. His exceptional generosity to some does not make him unfair to others.

In this parable, Jesus illustrates that the hope of salvation is available to all, regardless of their works or effort.

Other passages in the Bible that emphasize this include:

*<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

<sup>21</sup> But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:21–24)

<sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: <sup>9</sup> If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

<sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

<sup>11</sup> As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame.”

<sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, <sup>13</sup> for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-13)

### **3. Assurance**

Salvation by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, produces assurance, confidence, and peace in one’s heart. Our salvation is secure because it’s in God’s hands, not our own. We don’t produce it, deserve it, or earn it; therefore, nothing we do will undo it or diminish it.

*<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all.  
(Romans 4:16)*

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)*

*<sup>31</sup> What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31–32)*

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.  
(Hebrews 10:19–22)*

It is often misunderstood that salvation by Grace Alone, through Faith Alone, gives us license to commit sin. This error also circulated in the initial days of Christianity. The apostles addressed this issue in their writings to first century congregations:

*<sup>4</sup> For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (Jude 4)*

Paul clarifies in his letters that being unconditionally forgiven doesn't give us freedom to practice sin.

*<sup>1</sup> Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (Romans 6:1-2)*

*<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (I Corinthians 6:9-11)*

*<sup>16</sup> They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good. (Titus 1:16)*

Several passages point out how salvation in Christ, by grace through faith, transforms the way we live.

*<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do*

*good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10)*

In this passage, Paul emphasizes the main thrust of the Christian message: we are sinners saved by grace through faith. Yet, while we aren't saved *by* works, we are saved *for* works—works that God actually prepared for us before we even existed .

James writes to clarify the relationship of faith to works with an angle very similar to Paul's.

*<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

*<sup>20</sup> You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed*

*God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.*

*<sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:14-26)*

Therefore, since we’re saved by Faith Alone, what are we to make of the many passages that emphasize the necessity of works? James is not teaching the need to add works to faith in order to experience salvation, but that if we *have* experienced salvation through faith in Christ, our actions will inevitably line up with what we believe.

There is a math analogy that might help illustrate his point:

<b>Faith + Works ≠ Salvation</b>
<b>Faith – Works ≠ Salvation</b>
<b>Faith = Salvation + Works</b>

This is how the New Testament explains the relationship between belief and actions. Ultimately, we do what we believe—actions never lie. Consider the difference between a thermometer and a thermostat. A thermometer reveals the temperature in the room, while a thermostat determines the temperature. Faith is the thermostat; works is the thermometer. Faith determines what we do; our works simply reveal those beliefs.

Grace Alone is counter-intuitive. Because of grace, we don't serve God for His love, but from His love. Other religions teach that if you comply with God, you'll receive grace. Christianity teaches the opposite: if you truly experience grace, you will comply with God as a result—and that's what's amazing about grace!



# Scripture Alone

Scripture is our ultimate authority. It was written by men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is distinct from other books, even those which may contain good advice. The Bible's influence over our lives is supreme because it communicates God's voice.

*<sup>8</sup> "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

*<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, <sup>11</sup> so is My word that goes out from My mouth: It will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:8–11)*

*<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*  
(2 Timothy 3:14-17)

*<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)*

The Bible is a collection of books written in many different literary genres over a period of more than a thousand years. Its authors were from diverse backgrounds, including ministers, kings, farmers, and physicians. Its overarching story details Redemptive History—how God has acted through various events in time to bring salvation to humanity.

God's plan of redemption was foreshadowed in the writings of the Old Testament. It was fulfilled in the life of Jesus, which is detailed in the Gospels. The salvation Jesus brought to humanity through His death and resurrection is then unpacked in the rest of the New Testament.

*<sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:44–47)*

<sup>43</sup> *All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.” (Acts 10:43)*

<sup>1</sup> *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—<sup>2</sup> the gospel He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures <sup>3</sup> regarding His Son, who as to His earthly life was a descendant of David, <sup>4</sup> and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 1:1–4)*

<sup>3</sup> *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)*

Jesus (and other Biblical writers) encourage us to immerse ourselves in the study of God’s Word to experience salvation in a more dynamic and transformative way.

<sup>32</sup> *Now I commit you to God and to the word of His grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)*

<sup>18</sup> *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

<sup>13</sup> *And we also thank God continually because, when*

*you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)*

A Christian's life should be governed by Scripture. In it, we find trustworthy principles, ethical guides, and clear commands from God. The Bible contains historical accounts and moral precedents that encourage us to make right choices and develop exceptional character.

*<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, <sup>2</sup> but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law day and night. <sup>3</sup> That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)*

*<sup>24</sup> Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. (Matthew 7:24–25).*

*<sup>5</sup> If you love Me, keep My commands. (John 14:5)*

*<sup>3</sup> We know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commands. (1 John 2:3)*

# Glory Alone

While the Bible is our ultimate authority, it can't be our only authority. Many decisions we face in life aren't a clear "do or do not" found in Scripture. These decisions are not a matter of "what" to do, but "why" we do it.

Our motivation in life, our *Why*, is to glorify God. This is the thought represented in the Latin phrase "*Soli Deo Gloria*"—Glory Alone. It means that the underlying motivation for the choices we make is to glorify God in all we do. The moral compass for a Christian can be summed up in two words: "FOR HIM." We see Paul emphasize this in several of his writings.

*<sup>9</sup> For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14:9)*

*<sup>14</sup> For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.*

*<sup>15</sup> And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)*

*<sup>19</sup> For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. (Galatians 2:19)*

*<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17)*

# How We Live

While our vision articulates what we desire to become, our mission statement details how we get there. The Mission Statement of Classic City is: Honoring the Greatness of Jesus Christ by Growing Spiritually, Living Authentically, and Participating in His Purposes.

## Growing Spiritually

Spiritual growth is the most emphasized topic in the New Testament. It is crucial to our lives. The following passage from Paul's writings details how it happens and its powerful effects.

*<sup>9</sup> ... We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, <sup>10</sup> so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, <sup>12</sup> and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light. (Colossians 1:9-12)*

In this passage, Paul is encouraged by the faith of these new believers and prays that they will be "*filled with the knowledge of His will*"—emphasizing the importance of studying and soaking in God's word. If one prioritizes God's word, they will "*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way.*"

Paul elaborates what it means to live a life that “pleases Him in every way” in the rest of this passage. It includes: being fruitful or impactful in our every endeavor, knowing God better through the many experiences we encounter in life, having His power energize us, making us capable of handling life’s challenges successfully, and enabling us to have an attitude of joy and gratitude.

Spiritual Growth is a process. One becomes a Christian by believing the Gospel. We continue to grow as Christians by immersing ourselves in God’s Word. We become disciples by consistently applying the truths of Scripture in our personal lives. Over time, as we continue to grow spiritually, we will minister to others by guiding them in this process.

Regardless of where we are in this process, making an investment to learn and follow God’s Word is essential to maturing into a stable and productive follower of Christ.

On the next page is a simple chart that details these stages of Spiritual Growth:

**from an UNBELIEVER to a CHRISTIAN**

This transition happens as we understand and believe the gospel.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)*

**from a CHRISTIAN to a GROWING CHRISTIAN**

This transition happens as we nourish our faith through soaking in God's Word.

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. (1 Peter 2:2)*

**from a GROWING CHRISTIAN to a DISCIPLE**

This transition happens as we consistently implement the truths we discover in God's word.

*Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31–32)*

**from a DISCIPLE to a DISCIPLE MAKER**

This transition happens as we minister to others.

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."  
(Matthew 28:18–19)*



# Living Authentically

Authenticity is the alignment of our beliefs with our actions.

Imagine a large rubber band wrapped around both your wrists, stretched out as far apart as possible. The tension felt signals that something must change. Either your left wrist has to move toward your right, or your right wrist has to move toward your left. The strain will be relieved one way or the other.

The same is true in our lives. A gap between the way we live and what we believe won't last forever. Either our actions align with our beliefs, or our beliefs align with our actions. Inevitably, we align our decisions with God's Word, or we compromise God's Word to justify our selfish desires.

Many passages from the New Testament speak about the importance of living out what we believe.

*<sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*  
(Ephesians 4:1)

*<sup>27</sup> Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.* (Philippians 1:27)

*<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught.*  
(Colossians 2:6–7)

*<sup>6</sup> Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did.*  
(1 John 2:6)

Alignment is a process. It doesn't happen immediately or permanently. It is the result of persistent effort to learn truth and implement it into our lives. As we commit to know God through His Word, our self-understanding, the way we think, and ultimately how we live will transform. In the Bible, there are several passages that point this out.

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*  
(Romans 12:1-2)

*<sup>20</sup> That, however, is not the way of life you learned <sup>21</sup> when you heard about Christ and were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. <sup>22</sup> You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup> to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*  
(Ephesians 4:20-24)

*<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—*

*not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—  
they will be blessed in what they do. (James 1:22–25)*

A personal story from my life illustrates this dynamic. Years ago, my wife and I purchased a home that needed a lot of work, including the back yard. We had 18 large pine trees cut down and moved dirt all around to flatten it. We then sodded the entire back yard with several rolls of centipede grass.

All this took place late in the fall when grass is dormant. As I looked at the yard and saw that it was covered in weeds, I became alarmed. I called the man I purchased the sod from, and he reassured me that this was no problem. He advised me to wait until the temperature reached 80 degrees in the spring, apply a small amount of Weed & Feed throughout the yard, and water the grass for a week.

He then explained that centipede grass is extremely strong. “If you grow the grass,” he said, “it will kill all the weeds.” When the spring came, I did as he suggested, and within a few weeks there were no weeds in our yard. It looked like a golf course!

What is true of my yard is true of our souls—if we look at all the weeds and try to pull them out one by one, we’ll experience frustration rather than progress. However, if we grow ourselves spiritually, the power of a healthy, vibrant soul, nourished on God’s Word, will transform the misaligned areas of our life, bringing them into compliance with God’s will.

There is a stretch of verses found in Ephesians 4:25-5:6 that details what it looks like for a Christian to live authentically.

## **Personal Integrity**

*<sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.*

## **Controlling Anger**

*<sup>26</sup> “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold.*

## **Work Ethic**

*<sup>28</sup> Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.*

## **Our Disposition Toward Others**

*<sup>29</sup> Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

## **Forgiveness**

*<sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

## Loving Others

*5<sup>1</sup> Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

## Sexual Purity

*<sup>3</sup> But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.*

Why is it so important that Christians live authentically, aligning our actions with our convictions? We do this for the sake of the priceless people around us who don't know Christ. Much more than a great sermon or a wonderfully produced worship service, an authentic Christian lifestyle is the most impactful demonstration of the gospel anyone can experience.

# Participating in His Purposes

We participate in God's purposes, fulfilling His plan for our lives, by building and extending the church community.

*<sup>34</sup> "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work". (John 4:34)*

*<sup>4</sup> I have brought You glory on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do. (John 17:4)*

*<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you. <sup>4</sup> In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, <sup>6</sup> being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:3-6)*

*<sup>11</sup> With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. <sup>12</sup> We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)*

While there are many ways to build and extend the church, Classic City Church focuses primarily on six of them:

## 1. Prayer

Prayer is a mystery, but its effects are powerful. God moves through fervent prayer to change circumstances. Not only

should we pray for our own needs, but for God's purposes to prevail in our community and around the world. Classic City Church encourages members to participate in daily personal prayer and weekly church prayer meetings.

*<sup>30</sup> I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. (Romans 15:30)*

*<sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (Ephesians 6:19-20)*

*<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. <sup>3</sup> And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. <sup>4</sup> Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (Colossians 4:2-4)*

## **2. Serving**

Classic City Church desires that each member serve monthly, whether ushering, greeting, working the children's ministry, etc. Not only are faithful volunteers crucial to the growth of the church, but volunteering faithfully is crucial to one's spiritual health. Committed service is also a great way to meet others as you work alongside a Sunday ministry team.

*<sup>2</sup> ... make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. (Philippians 2:2)*

*<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. (1 Peter 4:10–11)*

### **3. Giving**

Our ability to give varies greatly based on how God has blessed us. However, participating in God's purposes through giving is a privilege we all share. How we use our money reveals what is most important to us. Jesus taught, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). Giving financially is an essential way to participate in God's purposes.

In the Old Testament, God's people committed to a practice called tithing. The Hebrew word "tithing" means both *tenth* and *test*. The Hebrew people would dedicate ten percent of their income toward God's purposes. Tithing not only tests a believer's commitment to God's purposes, but also tests God's faithfulness to His people.

*<sup>9</sup> Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; <sup>10</sup> then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Proverbs 3:9-10)*

*<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the*



*floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.*  
(Malachi 3:10)

*<sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”* (Luke 6:38)

#### **4. Evangelism**

Jesus sent His disciples out two by two to spread the Gospel. They returned to Him, amazed at how God used them. Jesus responded with sheer elation, seeing in their efforts, “*Satan falling from heaven like lightning*” (Luke 10:18). God loves unbelievers, and is delighted when believers step out to reach them with the Gospel.

Every follower of Christ is uniquely gifted and specifically stationed to serve God in ministry. That means that God has created you with talents, experiences, and passions to reach particular people with the Gospel. It also means that wherever you are placed in life—where you live, work, and recreate — is your mission field.

*<sup>4</sup> Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.* (Acts 8:4)

*<sup>28</sup> He is the One we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.* (Colossians 1:28-29)

*<sup>8</sup> The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)*

## **5. Ministry to the Needy**

God loves the least: the poor, the weak, the fatherless, and those who lack. He desires them, wants them, and has invested great untapped potential in them! When Jesus began His ministry, He emphasized that the Holy Spirit was empowering Him to minister to the discarded (Luke 4:18-19). He identified with them to the extent that He told His followers, “*When you do it to the least of these, you have done it to Me*” (Matthew 25:40).

We want to care for the least as though they were Jesus! Fulfilling this calling will vary from person to person, but as a church, tremendous deference is extended to the discarded.

*<sup>10</sup> Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. <sup>11</sup> There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:10-11)*

*<sup>7</sup> The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern. (Proverbs 29:7)*

*<sup>10</sup> All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along. (Galatians 2:10)*

## **6. Discipleship**

Making disciples was the most central activity in Jesus' life. His last words urged His disciples to make disciples of others. In the gospels, Jesus clearly defined what it means to be a disciple: loving and serving others, willingness to sacrifice, and prioritizing scripture.

Participating in God's purposes is the process of becoming a disciple and helping others become disciples. Classic City Church encourages members to enter into relationships that focus on learning and implementing God's Word into their lives and helping others to do the same.

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."*  
(Matthew 28:18–19)

*<sup>2</sup> And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*  
(2 Timothy 2:2)

# In Closing

We deeply appreciate your interest in Classic City Church. The journey we're on has been special, and we are thrilled about the possibility of having you join us. If you're interested in taking that next step, please attend one of our Closer Look classes. We look forward to connecting with you!

*Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. All references to God are capitalized.*