

# **Tabor City Baptist Church**

## **Statement of Faith**

**"In all things essential, unity; in all nonessential, liberty; and in all things, love."**

### **Statement of Essential Beliefs**

This statement represents the most simple and foundational beliefs of Christianity from a Biblical and historical perspective. It captures the basic contours of Christian theology. Anyone pursuing membership and/or baptism at Tabor City Baptist Church must agree with the essentials in this statement.

### **Statement of Theological Distinctives**

While the doctrines expressed in the Statement of essentials are recognized universal and are primary within the Church, there are a number of secondary beliefs. Not all Christians hold these beliefs, but they are nonetheless important and true as we understand Scripture. Complete agreement with this statement of distinctives is not necessary for membership, it should be known that we will preach, teach, and counsel on the basis of these distinctives.

\*These beliefs are for our church. When partnering with other churches in Ministry, we will make sure that the other churches, para-churches, or organizations line up with the basic beliefs of the Christian faith.

### **Essentials**

#### **What is the Gospel?**

The gospel is the good news of God's grace invading the darkness of this world. It is the grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption and consummation ordained by God and orchestrated through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel. His resurrection is the power of the gospel. His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men can be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have in glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches and ministries to proceed from and be related to the gospel.

## **Man's Response to the Gospel**

The proper response to the gospel is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, a faith that is naturally accompanied by repentance from sin. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service and works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple.

## **The Church**

God, by His Word and Spirit, creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that newly redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. This service involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted in the entire world. The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring glory to God by making disciples. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper and prayer. All members of the Church are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context, they are called to live out the implications of the gospel as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the Church, including prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and oversight and the opportunity to steward their gifts for His glory and the good of the others.

## **About God**

God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. The Triune God is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, co-equal and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14

## **About Man**

Man is made in the spiritual image of God, to be like him in character. He is the supreme object of God's creation. Although man has tremendous potential for good, he is marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin." This attitude separates man from God.

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2

## **About Eternity**

Man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or in union 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 places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; 1 John 2:25; 1 John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; Matthew 25:31-46

## **About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a perfect, sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13

## **About Salvation**

Salvation is a gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by repentance of sin and trusting in Jesus Christ, as God's offer of forgiveness can man be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one follows Jesus as Lord. Jesus is the only way for salvation.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8, 9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; John 3: 16; Romans 10: 9- 10

## **About The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under his control daily.

2 Corinthians 3: 17; John 16:7-13, 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1

## **About The Bible**

The Bible is God's word to all men. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error. We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession or theology, must be tested by the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

## **About Believer's Baptism by Immersion**

Baptism by immersion symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and is your public declaration that you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Baptism does not save you, but shows the world that you have already been saved.

And while baptism is not required for salvation, it is a biblical command and demonstrates your love and obedience to Christ. (Colossians 2: 12; Acts 2:41; Ephesians 2: 8 -9; Matthew 3: 13 - 17, 28: 19 -20)

## **About Communion**

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is an ordinance given to all believers by Jesus Christ to remember his sacrifice for us and to symbolize the new covenant. The elements of bread and wine or juice are symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood.

Communion is not a means of salvation. Rather, it is a testament of a believer's faith in the atoning work of the cross. (Matthew 26: 26 - 30; Mark 14: 22-26; Luke 22: 19,20; 1 Corinthians 11: 23 - 32)

## **Theological Distinctives**

### **Divine Sovereignty**

God is sovereign over all things such that there is no aspect of reality outside of His ultimate control. (Psalm 115:3, 135:6; Ephesians 1: 3 - 14; Colossians 1: 15 - 23; Romans 8: 26 - 9:23; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 2: 13)

### **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit that we see exercised in the Scriptures have not ceased with the death of the last Apostle or the closing of the New Testament canon. They are available today and are to be eagerly desired and practiced in submission to the Spirit speaking through the Scripture. (Romans 12: 3 - 8; 1 Corinthians 12 - 14; Ephesians 4: 1 - 16)

### **The Complementary Role of Men and Women**

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value but are different by divine design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and church, especially as it comes to teaching and authority. These role distinctions are God's grace to man and woman and are to be protected, preserved and practiced for His glory and our joy. We believe that women can be deacons and serve on staff. We do not believe women can have an authoritative role as Pastors / Elders. We believe that men and women are raised up to serve in the body of Christ and unleashed in the mission of God to their full potential. (1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-35; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Peter 3:1-7, Genesis 1 - 3).

### **Eternal Security**

Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. (John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7: 25; 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3 - 5)