

Maple Street Community Church "What We Teach"

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The Bible is God's written revelation to man, verbally inspired by God in all that it states (2 Timothy 3:15-17) and expressed by human authors according to their individual personalities and writing styles as they were led by the Holy Spirit in this work of dual-authorship (Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21). The sixty-six books of the Bible are completely inerrant in their original form (autographs) and provide man's only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and practice (Psalm 19:7-9; Matthew 5:18; John 16:13; 17:17).

DOCTRINE OF GOD

There is only one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Ephesians 4:4-6), eternally existing in three holy persons: Father, Son and Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). He is the all-powerful, all-wise creator (Genesis 1; Ephesians 3:9-10) who is invisible, personal and omnipresent spirit (John 4:24); unchangeable in His being, perfections, purposes and promises; dependent and reliant upon none (Isaiah 50:7-12); and sovereign over all things past, present and future. He is perfect in goodness, love, grace and mercy, as well as in justice, righteousness and truth (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 86:15; 145:8; Isaiah 5:16; Jeremiah 9:24; 1 John 4:8).

God the Father

God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, decrees and disposes all things according to His own good purpose, ultimately for His glory (Ephesians 1:3, 9-11; cf. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Romans 11:33-36). He is Father to all men by creation, but He is spiritual Father only to those who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9). His fatherhood functions within the Trinity, where the Son and the Holy Spirit are functionally subordinate to Him (John 3:16-17; 14:10; 17:1-4; Galatians 4:4).

God the Son

God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, is of one substance and co-eternal with the Father, sharing all the divine excellencies (John 1:14; 10:30; 14:9-10).

It was through the Son that God created all things and that it is the Son who upholds all creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

In His incarnation, which came about through a virgin birth (Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35), the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity took on all the essential characteristics of humanity and thereby united to His

fully divine nature the nature of man (John 1:1, 14; 17:5; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9) in order to reveal God, redeem men and reign over His kingdom (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 14:9-10; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:2-3; 2:6-9; 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

The incarnate Son, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, accomplished redemption for believing sinners through His perfect righteousness and sacrificial death on the cross, and that His death was voluntary, substitutionary and propitiatory (John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24).

In the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; Acts 2:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15) God confirmed His Son as Lord and gave proof that He accepted the atoning work of Christ, thus guaranteeing the future resurrection of all believers in Him (Psalm 2:7; John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23). The resurrected Jesus is Mediator before God for the believer (Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1), Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), the coming Davidic King (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33) and final Judge of all (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10; Revelation 20:11-15).

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34, with Hebrews 10:15-17), being eternal (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient and omnipotent (Isaiah 40:13-17). We also teach that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of personality, including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30) and will (1 Corinthians 12:11).

The Holy Spirit was involved in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation of the Son of God (Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35), written revelation (John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21) and salvation (John 3:5-8).

A unique work of the Holy Spirit began at Pentecost (John 16:7; Acts 1:8; 2:4) when He came from the Father and the Son (John 14:16-17; 15:26) to testify about the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:14) and build the church by transforming people into Christ's image and uniting them to Him (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:14-19; 4:12-13). We teach that the Holy Spirit permanently indwells every believer from the time of conversion (Romans 8:9-11), sealing them for the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13), and that it is the believer's ongoing duty to yield to the Spirit's control (Ephesians 5:18).

The Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes to every Christian gifts of service for

the edification of the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 14:1-19). We teach that speaking in tongues” and the corresponding sign miracles were for the purpose of authenticating the work of the Holy Spirit in establishing the church and were never intended to be normative behavior for believers in our time (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-16; Hebrews 2:1-4)

DOCTRINE OF MAN

Man was directly created by God in His image, free of sin and morally responsible for the choices he would make (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7, 22; cf. James 3:9). We teach that God's effectual purpose in creating man is His own glory (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; cf. Revelation 4:11) and that He designed man with a unique capacity to worship. Man must therefore worship God in all of life by walking in humble dependence on Him, willful obedience to Him and loving fellowship with Him (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

Sin

Through Adam's sin against God (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19) all mankind incurred the consequences of spiritual and physical death (Romans 5:12; 6:23), inheriting an inner corruption of the heart which inevitably leads to rebellion against God, making every man and woman an enemy of God and object of His wrath (Romans 1:18-23; 3:9-18, 23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 10:27; 1 John 1:8, 10), Jesus Christ being the only exception. With no ability to restore himself, man is, on his own, hopelessly lost.

Death

In physical death the soul is separated from the body (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21-24; Revelation 6:9-11) and, on the last day, will be united to his resurrected and glorified body, and thus will be with our Lord forever in conscious and joyful fellowship (John 6:40; Romans 8:18-23; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20, 26, 35-44, 50-55; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 5:1-4; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 20:4-6). The soul of the lost also consciously awaits his bodily resurrection, while being kept under punishment, only to be eternally punished by God in hell (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 10:28; 25:41-46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:24-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:11-15).

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Salvation, (by which a man or woman is reconciled to God, released from the bondage of sin, delivered from God's wrath against sinners and, when the Lord returns, will have the presence of sin eradicated), is a work of God by His grace for His glory through faith in and in union with Christ Jesus (John 1:12-13; Romans 5:8-10; 6:3-11, 23; Ephesians 1:7; 2:1-10; Colossians 1:21-

23; 1 Peter 3:18).

Election

Election is the act of God before the foundation of the world whereby, according to His good pleasure, He chose in Christ those whom He would graciously save (Romans 8:28-30; 9:11-16, 23; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9).

Election does not contradict nor negate human volition, nor remove man's responsibility (John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40), but that just as God ordained the people whom He would save, He also ordained the means by which salvation would be given (John 6:35-44), so that those who are appointed unto salvation willfully believe (Acts 13:48).

Regeneration

Regeneration is the Holy Spirit's work of changing a person's heart and giving new spiritual life (John 1:13; 3:3-7; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:17; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:4-7) through the instrumentality of the word (Acts 26:18; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23) so that his affections are inclined toward God and he is able to respond in faith and repentance (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7).

Justification

Justification of sinners before God is God's own just work by which He declares righteous those who have faith in Christ. This declaration of righteousness is not due to any virtue or meritorious work of man, but is rather grounded in one's union with Christ, whose substitutionary atonement paid the penalty for sin (Romans 3:21-26; 5:8-9; 8:33-34; Galatians 2:16; 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24).

Sanctification

When a believer is justified, he is instantaneously set apart for God and is therefore positionally holy and designated as a saint (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 14).

There is also a progressive, life-long aspect of sanctification by which the believer becomes like Jesus Christ, which will be fully realized at the Lord's return. Until then, waiting for the blessed hope of our Lord's return, the believer is called to battle sin and separate himself from the world's ways, having been given adequate provision for victory over sin through his union with Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the instruction of God's word (John 13:3, 14-15; 17:17; Romans 6:19, 22; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 4:13-24; Philippians 2:12-16; Colossians 3:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:1-14; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 1:3-11; 1 John 3:1-10).

Perseverance

All the redeemed persevere in faith to the end, so as to be saved, because God keeps them secure in Christ (John 3:36; 6:37-40; 10:27-29; 17:11; Romans 5:9-10; 6:21-23; 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Galatians

5:13-25; Philippians 1:6; Colossians 1:22-23; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; Hebrews 3:14; 7:25; 1 Peter 1:4-5; 1 John 2:19; 3:9; 5:18; Jude 24). Therefore, those who are in Christ and persevere in faith may rightly be assured of and rejoice in the security of their salvation (1 John 2:3-6, 25; 3:23-24; 5:13, 20).

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The church is made up of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ during this present age, who have been born of the Holy Spirit and united by Him to Christ.

Purpose

The purpose of the church is to glorify God in all of life by worshiping Him, encouraging one another in the faith and making disciples of Christ through instruction of the word and proclamation of the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 3:12-14).

One People of God

God eternally intended to make a people for Himself by redeeming them through Christ's atonement (Ephesians 1:3-14; 3:11). This people of God consists of all believers throughout history, including those from the nation of Israel and the church (John 10:16; Galatians 3:6-9, 28-29; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:6; 1 Peter 2:9-10). However, the church is different than Israel and has not replaced Israel as God's people (Romans 9:4-8, 24-26; 11:1-32), but was uniquely reconciled to God after Christ's earthly ministry with the coming of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant (Acts 2:4, 16-21; Ephesians 5:32).

Local Church

Christ's universal church is manifested locally everywhere believers regularly gather to worship as followers of Jesus Christ. Every Christian is responsible to participate in a local church that upholds truth (Hebrews 10:24-25) and ministers to one another by instruction, encouragement and admonishment (Matthew 18:12-17; Romans 12:5-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-26; Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Peter 4:7-11).

Government

Christ is the one supreme authority over the church (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27; Colossians 1:18) and that He has empowered and appointed leaders to serve under Him so that the congregation might learn to follow Christ (Mark 10:42-45; Acts 20:26-32; Colossians 1:28-29; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-5). The biblically designated officers of the church are elders (also called bishops, overseers, shepherds, pastors and pastor-teachers) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

Each local church should be self-governing, determining from scripture matters of policy, discipline and doctrine, without any external hierarchical authority over it. It is appropriate, however, for like-minded churches to cooperate with each other, to the extent determined by their elders, for the propagation of the faith, mutual encouragement and counsel.

Ordinances

The Lord has committed two ordinances to the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism by immersion in water is the testimony of a believer which visibly shows his faith in and commitment to the crucified, buried and risen Christ, and symbolizes his union with Christ in death to sin and resurrection to new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ, the church (Acts 2:38-42; Romans 6:1-11; 1 Peter 3:21). The Lord's Supper is the remembrance and proclamation of His death until He returns and should always be preceded by self-examination by the believing participants. The elements of the Supper are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, and yet, when partaken of, the believer acknowledges his union with the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:24-32).

DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

Angels are spirit-beings who were created by God to serve and worship Him and are not to be worshiped by man (Luke 2:9-14; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels

Satan is a created angel who incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his creator, taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14) and provoking the human race into sin by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15). Satan is now the declared enemy of both God and man, and though he is presently the prince of this world (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), he is defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20) and has eternal punishment prepared for him and his followers in the lake of fire (Isaiah 14:15; Ezekiel 28:16-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

The Lord Jesus Christ will gather His people and return in His physical body to this earth in a great display of power and glory to establish His kingdom, after which will be the final judgment of unbelievers and the eternal state of glory for the saved (Ephesians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:11-21; 20:7-15; 21:1-27; 22:1-21).