

STEADFAST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Our MISSION

We exist to see Jesus transform lives through His Word, Prayer and Loving Relationships.

Transformation is at the core of Galatians 4:19, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18 - to be “transformed into the image of Christ.” It involves the mind (the way we think), the heart (the center of our spiritual life) and the will (the center of our desires, intents and purpose for life). Therefore, transformation involves the renewing of the:

- Mind - Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2
- Heart - 1 Peter 1:22, 3:15
- Will - Philippians 2:13

Our STATEMENT OF FAITH

GOD

The LORD is our God, the LORD is one. *Deuteronomy 6:4b*

God is the only living and true God, the sovereign creator and ruler of the universe.

God exists in perfect unity within Himself as three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Spirit is God. The three persons of the Godhead are eternally and equally one God in essence and yet distinctly different in function (Ephesians 1:3-14).

- God the Father chooses and predestines; at salvation adopts us into His family; and loves us and cares for us as our heavenly Father. Such intimacy with the Father is manifested in prayer and the high privilege of addressing Him as *Abba*.
- God the Son is the eternal Son, who, through the virgin birth, added to His deity humanity, and, as the Godman, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, redeemed us from sin and now offers us eternal salvation. Jesus Christ was fully human so that he could be our substitute for sin and fully God so that He could be our perfect substitute. His death, burial and resurrection are the content of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-11) and His promise to return is the blessed hope of the church (Titus 2:13).

- God the Spirit is a gift from the Father to those who place their faith in Jesus. The Spirit baptizes us into membership in the church and is the pledge that Jesus will return for us. The Spirit makes His home in those who place their faith in Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He teaches us, brings to our remembrance the things Jesus has said to us in His word, convicts us of sin, and empowers us with gifts that are to be used for building up the body of the church. The Spirit is not an irrational, unreliable force that comes or goes according to our emotions. He is personal, indwells us and cannot be taken away from us. Since the Spirit is God, He cannot be manipulated for our own glory or selfish reasons; Jesus said the Holy Spirit “will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you” (John 16:14).

This Matters Because... God always was, always is, and will always be in perfect control of His universe. It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves. Our view of God is the most important thing about us. The Lord is our God, and the Lord is one. Since He is the only living and true God, He is the only God worthy of our worship and affection.

Since Jesus is God incarnate in human flesh, He was able to live a perfect life unstained by the curse of sin.

Since the Spirit is God, we can rely on His supernatural power living inside us to act exactly according to God, His character, His commands and His goals for us.

We have a model of love and selflessness within God that we try, by His grace, to emulate in our relationships within the church. Since God is united, we strive to be united.

SCRIPTURE

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

God inspired different authors, in their distinct personalities, to write the books of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21). God directed the process that gave us the 66 books of the Bible, therefore in their original form they are without error. Those applying themselves to study its literal, historical, and grammatical context can understand and apply God’s Word to their lives and grow in relationship with God (1 Peter 2:1-3).

This Matters Because... we are prone to define truth based only on our own limited experiences, biased opinions, and selfish desires. Our belief about the Scriptures compels us to preach the Bible as truth (John 17:17), to encourage people to read it regularly (Acts 17:11), and submit to its authority as we all grow to maturity in Jesus Christ. We base our leadership, our lives, and our ministry on what God teaches in it.

CREATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. *Genesis 1:1*

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; therefore, our lives and our bodies are not our own, but His. Since we believe God has created us, we are to glorify Him in everything we do, and not just please ourselves. *1 Corinthians 10:31*

God created the heavens, the earth, and all things in them in six days and rested on the seventh day.

God formed man out of dust and breathed life into his form, making him a spiritual being. God formed woman out of the body of man. God created man and woman in His image to reflect His image to the world.

This Matters Because... since we are both physical and spiritual beings created in God's image, we are accountable to Him and have the responsibility to represent our Creator to the world. Human beings are not products of random chance but are of infinite value and worth to God.

THE FALL

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. *Romans 5:12*

Man (Adam) rebelled against God and imputed that sin to the rest of the human race. Our rejection of God's authority curses every aspect of our lives and condemns us to a life without God (*Genesis 3; Romans 8:18-22*) and an eternity separated from Him in Hell.

This Matters Because... apart from God, we are not merely sick with sin, we are dead in sin. Understanding our sin and its devastating consequences is essential to knowing our need for forgiveness and reconciliation to our Creator.

THE GOSPEL

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. *Ephesians 2:8-9*

The Gospel, the great news, is that God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, has demonstrated His love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He lived a perfect life, died the sacrificial death that we deserve, and was then raised from the dead. The penalty for sin is paid.

Man's response is either acceptance or rejection of this gift. By our faith, God applies Christ's finished work to our lives and we are thereby reconciled to God. But the good news is not only that God forgives our sins, but He also declares us righteous. By faith He offers us a new way of life through faith in Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. If anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

Therefore, accepting this Gospel is not just a decision we make once and forget about, it results in a daily commitment to keep trusting God.

This Matters Because... our sins are so wicked that even our best works are like filthy rags compared with God's standards. We cannot earn our way to God through good works, church attendance, or moral behavior. Instead, we must place our trust in the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, who lived the life we could not live, died the death we should have died, and was raised so that we could be raised with Him.

SALVATION

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. ROMANS 6:23

In His grace and mercy, God promised that a descendant of Adam and Eve would provide a way for fallen human beings to be rescued from the curse of sin and death.

This Matters Because... God's response to our sin is not to destroy us but to graciously promise to save us from our sin. Despite our attempts to improve or reach perfection, even our best works are as filthy rags compared to the holiness of God. Through Jesus, God displays His unmerited favor, His grace, towards us. By grace through faith in Jesus and His finished work is the only path to salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We sense a moral Law within us (Romans 2:14-16); this Law was revealed in the Ten Commandments God gave to Israel. Though we know this Law - either from the moral Law within us or through the Ten Commandments - we are incapable of perfectly keeping it.

Since we are unable to keep God's moral Law perfectly, we are guilty before a holy, just God, who cannot ignore sin. However, God is not only infinitely holy and just, He is perfectly merciful and loving, and was pleased to allow His Son, Jesus Christ, to bear the guilt of human sin on the cross. As the Apostle Paul described it, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Thus, God has become both the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-26).

The salvation God offers us has three dimensions:

- *Justification* - is a legal declaration by God, a verdict of acquittal, excluding all possibility of condemnation. Because of the forensic nature of justification, God also declare us righteous. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is “added to our account” so that His righteousness becomes our righteousness. [Romans 6:1-14]
- *Sanctification* - is the process through which the Father transforms us into the image of His Son through the Holy Spirit. [Romans 6:22; Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 4:19; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18]
- *Glorification* - the act by God of giving us perfect resurrection bodies, united with our souls, which will live forever in fellowship with Him. [1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-53]

This Matters Because... Salvation is not just about asking God for forgiveness from our sins. Repenting and receiving forgiveness are the first steps on a journey that require us to trust God at every step. Understanding the difference between justification (an event) and sanctification (a process) helps us understand that the trials and sufferings we experience are part of God’s refining process. Through justification we have been saved from the **penalty** of sin; through sanctification we are being saved from the **power** of sin; and through glorification we will be forever saved from the **presence** of sin.

CHURCH

Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

The church is an assembly of diverse people united by faith in Jesus Christ and called to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light. The members of the church are like living stones God uses to build a spiritual house to inhabit.

Jesus is the Head of the church, which means He is the source of life, guidance, and authority.

Jesus commanded His disciples to remember His sacrificial death through the Lord’s Supper. In the breaking of bread we remember how His body was broken for us and in the drinking of the cup we remember how His blood was shed for us.

Jesus also commanded us to baptize disciples in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We baptize by immersion in water to symbolize the cleansing Jesus gives us from sin. In going under water, we picture our death with Christ, and in coming out of the water, we picture being raised to new life in Christ. It is a public identification with Jesus Christ.

This Matters Because... the church is not merely a building or a program - as important as those things are. Since the church is a living body of individual believers, we are to “consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

FUTURE

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Philippians 3:20*

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as He is. *1 John 3:2*

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. *1 Thessalonians 4:17*

The future is secure in God's hands, and is moving steadily toward the return of Jesus to the earth. Though no one can know when this return will take place, we are certain that God will keep His promises, and that the believer will live with Jesus forever. Some of the most prominent of God's promises about the future include the bodily resurrection of believers, the final defeat of Satan, the destruction of evil, the restoration and salvation of God's people, Israel, and a new heaven and a new earth.

This Matters Because... it is the believer's strongest hope in the middle of a sin-stained, broken world. Though the world continues to unravel we can stand undaunted because we know how the story ends, and we can encourage others to do the same. In short, the return of Christ is the anchor for our hope. While it often seems that God has abandoned His people and that evil is winning, we cling to the promised return of Jesus and the subsequent restoration of all things.

THE BATTLE

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. *Ephesians 6:11*

Satan was created by God and given great beauty and power, but he chose to try and usurp God's authority. In pride, he rebelled against God and tried to take His place as the ruler of heaven. God stopped this rebellion and Satan fell from heaven with a host of angelic beings and now "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." *1 Peter 5:8-9; Isaiah 14:10-14; Ezekiel 28:1-19*

Satan is the accuser of Christians, seeking any opportunity to "steal, kill, and destroy" the people of God. *John 10:10; Revelation 12:9-11*

This Matters Because... we cannot forget that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." People are not the enemy; Satan is the enemy (*Ephesians 6:10-20*).

While Satan is a powerful enemy, He is an enemy Christ has already defeated through His death and resurrection. Therefore, we must not despair at his attacks nor should we dismiss them as inconsequential. Instead, we can stand firm in Christ, using His spiritual armor.