

Statement of Faith

First Baptist Church of Milton

This statement was written by the Elders and approved by the Congregation of FBC Milton on October 20th, 2024. The purpose of this document is to state, organize, and clarify the distinct doctrinal views and practices of our church in order to facilitate unity of the local body and to facilitate discipleship.

I. Doctrine of Scripture

We believe that the 66 canonical books of the Old and New Testament are the final authority for Christian faith and practice. They are inerrant in their original texts, reliable in most modern translations, infallible in matters of doctrine, and sufficient for every part of the Christian life. All Scripture is given by God and is profitable for teaching, correction, and reproof. We hold that Scripture is written by God, working through various human authors, so that the singular plan of Redemption is expressed in a myriad of styles and genres. In the wisdom of God, the Scriptures have one meaning with many applications. We believe in the weekly, expository preaching of the Word with the expectation that God's people will submit themselves to it.

Nm 23:19; Deut 4:1-3; Ps 19:7-10; Ecc 12:9-11; Is 40:8; Mt 5:17-18; Lk 21:33, 24:44-46; Acts 15:22-29; 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 1:1-2, 4:12; 2 Pt 1:19-21

II. Doctrine of God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. God is invisible, omnipresent, almighty, and all-knowing. His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present, and future. God is unchanging, dependent upon none, sovereign, righteous, holy, just, gracious, loving, merciful, patient, and good. This one true and living God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are One in being, co-eternal, and exist in relationship to one another. There is perfect unity of mind, thought, and purpose within the Trinity. We believe that God does all things for His own glory.

Deut 6:4; Ps 145; Is 6:3; Jer 10:10; Mt 3:16-17, 28:19; Jn 1:1-3, 4:24; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Tim 1:17; 1 Pet 1:15-16; Rev 4:8

A. The Father

We believe that God the Father is the creator of heaven and earth, and He is the source of all that is good. He created all that now exists from nothing by His Word and for His glory. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acted together in the work of creation. Through the same Word with which He

created, He daily sustains all creation. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only supreme power and authority. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. In His sovereignty, He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass, yet He is neither the author nor approver of sin, nor does He diminish the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him, and in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption.

Gen 1:1, 27; Ecc 7:29; Hab 1:13; Jn 1:2-3, 8:38-47; Rom 1:20; Eph 1:11; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:1-2; 1 Pet 1:17

B. The Son

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God to man and carry out God's plan of redemption. He is the Word made flesh, the true Prophet, Priest, and King, the hoped for Messiah. We believe that Christ committed no sin and completely fulfilled the righteous requirement of God's Law. He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross, where He became our substitutionary sacrifice, and through His resurrection, which is the proof of the sufficiency of His death as the payment for our sins and which secures for believers both justification and eternal life. By His death and resurrection, believers are forgiven of their sin, declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God. After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven to appear in the presence of God as our perpetual High Priest, presenting Himself as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin, and to sit at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the one and only Mediator between God and men. He is Head of His church. He intercedes forever on behalf of His people and rules over all things for their sake. We believe Christ rules and reigns over His kingdom now. We believe in and hope for the literal and physical return of Christ, at which point He will judge the living and the dead, receive His church, and reconcile all of creation to Himself.

Ps 110:1; Mt 28:1-7; Lk 2:26-38; Jn 1:1-4; Acts 1:9-11, 7:55-56; Rom 4:25, 8:3-4, 34; 1 Cor 15; 2 Cor 5:21; Col 1:15-20; 1 Thes 4:13-18; Heb 1:3, 3:1, 4:14-16, 7:23-25; 1 Jn 2:1-2; Rev 20-21

C. The Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit brings glory to the Father and the Son. The Spirit came upon and empowered God's prophets, priests, and kings to accomplish His purposes for His glory. He applies the work of Christ to believers and distributes spiritual gifts to every believer according to His sovereign good pleasure for the purpose of building up the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by vulgar or pretentious display designed to impress or attract notice, but glorifies Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith. He is the Comforter, the Spirit of Adoption, the Seal of our

Salvation and the Guarantor of our inheritance in Christ. We believe God the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He dwells in all who believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit regenerates those who are dead in trespasses and sins, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness.

Ezek 36:26-27; Mt 28:19; Jn 1:13, 3:3-8, 14:16-17, 14:26, 16:13-14; Acts 1:8, 5:3, 16:6-7, 16:14; Rom 8:14-17; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 Cor 3:18, 5:17, 13:14; Eph 1:13-14, 2:1-6, 4:4-6; Col 2:13; Tit 3:5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:2, 1:3, 1:23-25; 1 Jn 5:1

III. Doctrine of Man

We believe that God created man in His image and gave him the highest place among the created beings. Since all men in every tribe, tongue, and nation are created in God's image, all men are deserving of dignity and respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, socioeconomic status, or any other dividing factor from the moment of their conception, just as Christ exhibits no partiality in his judgment or mercy. The whole of man is to glorify God through worshiping Him and keeping His commandments. Adam, the first man, and Eve, the first woman, were created without sin, male and female, each to display the image of God in unique and complementary ways. He made them good and upright, with a body and an eternal soul. God made a covenant of works with Adam requiring perfect and perpetual obedience, promising life for fulfilling it and threatening death for breaking it.

Adam sinned against God by yielding to Satan's temptation, voluntarily sinning and breaking the covenant of works. This resulted in the total corruption, deserved condemnation, and both physical and spiritual death of Adam and his descendants. Because all men are in Adam as their federal head, a totally depraved nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been imputed and transmitted to them. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration. In this fallen state, man suppresses the knowledge of God which has been clearly made known to him through creation. He is unable to save himself. Man's inability is his own doing and does not negate any of his responsibility to follow the commands of God. Scripture plainly teaches both God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.

Gen 1-3; Jer 17:9; Rom 1-5, 8:7-8; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:1-5; Gen 1:27; Ecc 7:29, 12:13; Eph 2:13-16; Gen 2:7, 15-25; Jam 3:9; Is 43:7; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11; Gen 2:16-17, 3:1-19; Jn 3:36; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 2:13-14; 1 Jn 1:8; Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:9-18, 23, 5:10-12, 6:23

IV. Doctrine of Salvation

We believe that all people are born in sin and in need of salvation, that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, and that the message of salvation is carried on by faithful believers from generation to generation. The basic message of the gospel is stated in Romans 5:8, which says, "God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus Christ, the

second person of the eternal Trinity, clothed himself in humanity - becoming both fully God and fully man - so that He could be our perfect high priest, the sole mediator of our salvation. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. Though He had no sin of his own, Christ died on the cross as our substitute, bearing the wrath of God for our sin. Three days later He rose from the dead as proof that the payment for sin was made in full. By faith in this work of Christ, we receive, as a gift of grace and not a result of works, forgiveness from God and are no longer under His just condemnation. Where God the Father counted our sin to Christ, He now, by faith, counts Christ's righteousness to us and adopts us into His family. From this moment of regeneration on, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who begins to restore the image of God in us such that we can live a life glorifying to Him, a life of worship and obedience. While we do not attain sinless perfection in this life, the Holy Spirit helps us to replace our old sinful ways of thinking, acting, and doing such that we think, act, and do according to God's Word.

We believe that God is sovereign over salvation, that His sovereignty is consistent with the moral agency of man. His saving purposes extend back into eternity past, are carried out in human history, and stretch forward into eternity future. We understand Romans 8:29-30 to be the most concise formulation of God's saving work in the Scriptures. These verses contain five key elements of God's saving work: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.

- A. Foreknowledge and Predestination:** God's foreknowledge is not simply a foreseeing or a foreknowing of future events, rather it is a loving, intimate, relational knowledge of those who will be His people. In eternity past, God looked forward into the mass of undeserving sinners, every single one of whom deserved His wrath, and He chose to set His love and affection on multitudes of them, purposing to show them grace in Christ. Those who are foreknown are predestined to eternal life with God. This is also known as the doctrine of election.
- B. Calling:** Calling is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby He effectively causes those who are foreknown and predestined to be "born again" and "made alive" in Christ during their lifetimes. While God is free to call men and women to Himself any way He chooses, this effective call comes primarily through the normal preaching of the Gospel by human evangelists and/or through the reading of God's Word. The circumstances surrounding this moment of salvation vary widely from person to person, but each will include an understanding of the Gospel message and one's own need of it, conviction and repentance of sin, personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a new and deepening love for God and for other believers, and a new and growing desire and ability to walk in obedience to God's commands.
- C. Justification:** Justification and calling are simultaneous events. In justification, the sinner is legally declared not guilty of their sin by faith in Christ. The penalty for their sin, which is death, is counted as paid by Christ on His cross. The righteousness that God requires, and which was earned by Christ, is imputed to the believer. From the moment of justification on, the believer begins the process of sanctification, which is a growth in conformity to Christ.

Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby the believer grows in holiness as he gives himself to various means of grace, including but not limited to personal study and application of God's Word, ongoing confession and repentance, gathering for worship with a community of believers in a local church, evangelism, and other acts of obedience.

D. Glorification: Glorification is the ultimate end and goal of salvation. According to Romans 8:29-30, all those who are foreknown and predestined in eternity past will be glorified in eternity future. Therefore, no one who is truly born again by the Holy Spirit will lose their salvation. By God's grace, He will keep them for eternal life. In glorification, the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification is brought to completion as the believer is fully and finally set free from the effects of sin and transformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

Ezek 36:26-27; Mt 10:22, 28:18-20; Mk 1:14-15; Jn 1:14-18, 3:3-8, 3:16-21, 6:35-44, 10:27-30, 14:6; Acts 2:37-38, 4:12; Rom 1:16-18, 3:21-26, 4:20-25, 5:8, 6:23, 8:1-4, 8:11-14, 8:29-39, 9:11-18, 10:9-17; 1 Cor 1:7-9, 1:18-24, 2:9-16, 15:3-5; 2 Cor 3:17-18, 4:1-6, 5:14-21; Gal 2:16, 2:20, 5:13-14, 5:22-24; Eph 1:3-14, 2:1-10; Phil 1:6, 2:12-13, 3:7-16; Col 3:16-17; 1 Thes 1:4-5, 5:9-10, 5:23-24; Tit 1:1-3, 3:4-8; Heb 4:14-16, 9:11-28, 10:10, 10:24-25, 12:1-2; Jam 2:19-27; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 1 Jn 1:9, 2:1-6, 4:7-21, 5:1-5; Jude 1:24-25

V. Doctrine of the Church and the Ordinances

A. The Body of Christ

We believe in the universal church as a unified body of Christ, and the local church as the visible community of faith. The local church gathers on the Lord's Day to worship the Lord through the hearing of the expositional preaching of the Scriptures, the singing of spiritual songs and hymns, prayer and confession, the regular observance of the Lord's supper, and occasions for the baptism of regenerate believers. We believe God's will for His church is to build each member's faith by edification, hold each other accountable to grace-based obedience through biblical discipline, and engage together in local and global evangelism and discipleship.

Gen 2:3; Ex 20:8; Lev 19:30; Ps 26:8; Ps 87:3; Ps 118:15, 24; Is 56:2-8; Is 58:13-14; Mt 18:17; Mk 2:27; Lk 4:16; Jn 14:15; Jn 14:21; Jn 15:12; Jn 20:19; Gal 6:2; Acts 5:11; Acts 8:1; Acts 11:21-23, 26; Acts 13:44; Acts 17:2-3; Acts 20:7; Rom 1:1-3; 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Cor 14:12; 1 Cor 16:1-2; Eph 4:1-7; Eph 4:3; Heb 4:3-11; Heb 10:24-25; Jam 5:16; 1 Jn 1:7-9; 1 Jn 4:21; 2 Jn 6; Rev 1:10

B. Structure and Biblical Offices

We believe the Bible teaches the self-governing autonomy of the local church. The Scriptures teach that Christ is the head of the church and that He has gifted the church with the offices of elders and deacons who serve at the will of the congregation.

(1) Congregationalism

We believe the local church is self-governing, but should also maintain bonds of faith with similar local congregations. The congregation is the final human authority in matters of church membership, church discipline, church leadership (including elders, deacons, and teachers), and church resources/finances.

Acts 6:2-7; 2 Cor 2:6; Mt 18:15-20

(2) Biblical Offices

We believe there are two ordained biblical offices of the church. Those who hold these positions have been examined and affirmed by the congregation according to their distinct Scriptural qualifications.

(a) Elders are men who have been called to shepherd the flock, the body of Christ. Their responsibilities include praying for the flock, studying, teaching, and preaching the Word.

(b) Deacons have been called to serve by meeting practical needs.

1 Tim 3:1-13; Phil 1:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:22; Tit 1

C. Ordinances

We believe there are two biblical ordinances for the church to administer:

(1) Baptism

We believe that Christian baptism is the public profession of our faith in the person and work of Christ in His life, death, and resurrection. It is a representation of the believer's dying to sin and resurrection to new and eternal life. Baptism as a biblical ordinance is administered by the Church in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by means of immersion in water, typically celebrated in the assembly of the congregation. We hold that believer's baptism is an act of obedience to Christ's command and is a requirement for church membership.

Mt 3:5-6, 28:19-20; Mk 16:16; Jn 3:22-23; Acts 2:38, 2:41-42, 8:12, 8:36-39, 10:47-48, 22:16; Rom 6:4; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:12

(2) The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the communal sharing of bread and fruit of the vine in the fellowship of believers as a remembrance of the work of Christ on the cross as we anticipate his return. This

biblical ordinance is administered by the Elders and/or Deacons of the church, and should be held regularly and as frequently as reasonable. The Lord's Supper is set apart as a time of solemn self-examination during the assembly of believers for worship. We practice close communion, meaning that regenerate (and preferably baptized) believers who are in good standing of a church of like faith and practice may celebrate the Lord's Supper with our church members. We ask that the parents of unbaptized children keep their children from taking the Lord's Supper until they make a profession of faith and are baptized.

Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-20; 1 Cor 5:1-8, 11:17-32, 11:23-28

VI. Doctrine of Missions and Discipleship

A. Missions

We believe that Evangelism is the method by which God has sovereignly ordained to bring about faith in His people. Following the pattern of Christ's command to the Apostles, we believe in a three sphere approach to Evangelism:

(1) Local

Christians should be a light of the gospel to their family, in their vocation, and through their recreation. We believe that Christians are to image the gospel to their neighbor or those nearest to them regardless of status.

(2) Regional:

We believe that Christians are called to be a part of their regional areas in a way that honors Christ through meaningful and effective associations, collaborations with local churches, and social engagement.

(3) Global:

We believe that Christians should have a heart and mind towards Global Missions with the goal of bringing the gospel to every group of people and into every language, so that the full number of God's people will come to faith from every tribe, nation, and tongue. To this end, we believe in cooperative participation with other churches in the training and sending of missionaries, and other mission work.

Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:6-8; Rom 10:14-15

B. Discipleship

We believe that discipleship begins at conversion, continues throughout the Christian life, and seeks to see others become disciples of Christ. Following conversion, we believe that the Christian is designed by God to exist in community with other believers for the purpose of fellowship, instruction, reproof, and edification. We believe that we are saved into a broader community of believers who are most immediately seen in the local church. We believe (and expect) that Christians should grow in faith, knowledge, and obedience for the rest of their life. Because of this, all missions will have an emphasis on participating in the local church.

Rom 12; Phil 3:8-21; Tit 2

VII. The Doctrine of the Family

A. Male/Female Differences

God created the first male and female in His image with equal value and dignity, but with different appearances, perspectives, strengths, and purposes. As image bearers through creation, men and women are to perceive and portray that image as witnesses to God's glory. The physical differences between males and females are evident in creation according to God's design. The differences, however, go beyond physical traits and include the way we think, speak, relate, and act. These differences were ordained by God to complement each other for His glory. This complementarity can be seen not only in the physical, mental, and emotional differences, but also in the different roles to which men and women are called.

Gen 1, 2; Mt 19:4

B. Order, Headship, Leadership

In the order of creation, God created man first. This has implications for the family, the church, and the culture at large. In marriage, God ordained the male as the head of the household. In the Old Covenant, God established the offices of prophets, priests, and kings to be filled by men. In the New Covenant God established the roles of Apostles and Pastors/Elders to be filled by men. Man's primary calling is to image God by naming, dividing, and governing creation. Woman's primary calling matches God's work of generating, filling the earth by bringing forth new life, glorifying, and establishing communion. These gender specific roles are evidenced by Adam and Eve in Genesis 1 and 2. Similar to the differences between men and women in their bodies, the differences in their callings are a gift from God and emphasize, rather than negate or contradict, their equal value and worth. In Christ, this equality is reaffirmed as co-heirs of new life and justification by faith.

Gen 1, 2; Lev 21; Gal 3:28; Col 3:18, 19; 1 Tim 3:2

C. Marriage

Marriage is the covenant union between one man and one woman. Male and female are designed to come together in their distinct natures and roles to fill and rule the earth. This designed diversity is meant to build each other up and to please God. The sexual distinctions between men and women are fundamental to bearing God's image and spreading His glory through marriage and procreation. Humanity has two distinct and ordained genders for this purpose. It is in marriage and the family that we can most clearly see the distinctions between male and female in their nature and roles. This total self-giving union and communion between the sexes also bears witness to the greater mystery of an all-fulfilling union to come between Christ and His bride, the Church.

These harmonizing distinctions in nature and role and the respective covenant union in marriage mean that every person exists from and for others. This design also points to the greater principle that every person was created from and for God. Marriage is a complementary collaboration and unified partnership designed by God to meet each other's needs through intimacy, sex, love, respect, edification, provision, and sacrifice.

Gen 1,2; Mt 19:4-6; 1 Cor 7, Eph 5:22-32, 1 Pt 3:7

D. Sex

Sex is an intimate act designed by God for the confines of marriage to express the secure love that should define the union. However, scripture clearly depicts sex as more than only an act. Sex was designed to be the consummation of the marriage union, and also a healthy and enjoyable ongoing aspect of that relationship. God created marriage to be the good and beautiful means by which the husband and wife become one flesh, and come to know and love each other more deeply.

Gen 2, SoS, 1 Cor 7, 1 Tim 4:4, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Pt 3:7,

E. Procreation, Parenting, and Adoption

Marriage is also designed and used by God for the purpose of making worshippers for himself. Children are a heritage from the Lord and a living testimony to the union between a man and woman. There are distinctives in the roles of fathers and mothers; the role of the father is primarily concerned with discipline, whereas the role of the mother is primarily concerned with nurture.

There are two primary tasks for Christian parents:

- Parents are to raise children into fully grown, mature adults who can meet their own needs, contribute to the needs of others, and fulfill their God-given roles.

- Parents are the primary guide and spiritual leader in a child's life. Parents are commanded to teach their children to love the Lord with their whole being (heart, soul, mind, strength). Parents are to model grace filled faith and obedience in Christ for their children. Likewise, children are to honor and obey their parents.

Raising children into godly adults is not reserved only for biological parents; parenting goes beyond passing on genetic makeup. Adoption is a beautiful parallel to how God loves us in Christ. The same precepts and promises for biological parents apply to adoptive parents and children.

Deut 6; Psalm 127:3-5; Mal 2:15; Rom 8:12-17; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:20,21

F. Singleness

Though the natural differences between males and females are fundamental to creation, marriage is not essential for every believer to live a life pleasing to God. Singleness can be a gift. This gift can be best understood as equipping the single believer through focus, freedom, and flexibility to give themselves completely and contentedly to God and His people. We are, however, warned to not be led into temptation of sin through extramarital sex. If the unmarried are unable to resist temptation, they should marry.

7:1-7; Mt 6:33, Mt 19:12, 1 Cor 6:18

G. Divorce

The Lord hates divorce. Divorce is the dissolution of the covenant union between a man and woman. It is opposed to God's desire and design for marriage, and blemishes the picture of the gospel portrayed in marriage. Divorce mirrors the fallen nature of man and hardness of heart towards God and others. There are, however, occasions in which divorce is permissible according to scripture: adultery, abuse, neglect, and abandonment. In such instances, a period of separation for the purpose of counseling, repentance, and reconciliation may be prudent.

Ex 21; Mal 2:16; Mt 5; Mt 19:1-11; 1 Cor 7

VIII. Doctrine of the Last Things

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ will one day return physically to judge the world and consummate His Kingdom. Unbelievers will be condemned to an eternity of everlasting torment in hell along with Satan and his demons. Believers will be admitted into an eternity of everlasting life and joy in the blessed presence of God in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells. This new heavens and new earth is the restoration of this fallen world to its original perfection.

While the Scriptures teach that no one except the Father knows the exact time of Christ's return, they also teach that the end will come once the gospel has been proclaimed to every tribe, nation, and tongue and the full number of the elect have come to faith. As Christians, we are commanded to wait for Christ's return hopefully, eagerly, and missionally.

Mt 24-25; Jn 5:24-30; Acts 1:6-11, 17:31; Rom 2:1-16, 8:20-22; 1 Cor 15; 1 Thes 4:13-18; 2 Thes 2; Tit 2; Heb 9:28; 2 Pt 3; Rev 20-22