

Statement of Faith Governing the Teaching of Desiring God Community Church

Preface

The aim of this statement is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, and the glory of its Author. A passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples is best sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of the character of God. We thus aim to teach the whole counsel of God rather than aiming to discover and teach some minimum required for salvation. In affirming what we believe on these matters, we separate ourselves doctrinally from some brothers and sisters within the universal church. The cause of unity in the church, however, is best served not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, but by elevating the value of truth through stating clear doctrinal parameters, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across doctrinal boundaries, rather than by removing those boundaries. We commit ourselves to both elevating truth and loving our brothers.

1. The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are God-breathed, without error in the original manuscripts. They are the supreme and final authority for testing what is true and right.

[Numbers 23:19, Matthew 24:35, John 14:26, 16:13,14, 17:17, 1 Corinthians 2:13, 14:37, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21, 3:16]

2. God

There is only one living and true God, who exists eternally in three infinitely excellent Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person in the Godhead is fully and completely God.

[Deuteronomy 6:4, Psalm 96:4,5, Jeremiah 10:10, Matthew 16:16, 28:19, John 1:1, 15:26, Acts 5:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 12:11, 2 Corinthians 6:16, 13:14, Ephesians 4:30, Colossians 2:9, Hebrews 1:2,3]

God governs the universe in such a way as to magnify His glory; He foreordains and foreknows whatsoever comes to pass. God upholds, sustains, and governs all things, in order to bring about His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

[Genesis 45:5,7 Isaiah 40:26, 41:21-23, 42:8,9, 43:7, 46:9,10, 48:11, Psalm 33:10,11, 147:15-18, Proverbs 16:9, 33, 19:21, 21:1, Lamentations 3:37,38, Amos 3:6, Matthew 10:29,30, Romans 11:36-12:2, Colossians 1:16,17]

3. Creation

God created the entire universe out of nothing for the purpose of displaying His glory, for the everlasting joy of His precious possession, the redeemed from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

[Genesis 1:1, Deuteronomy 26:18, Isaiah 35:10, 43:7, Matthew 25:23, John 1:1-3, Hebrews 11:3, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:9, 7:9,10]

God created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. He created them male and female equally in the image of God. These two historic persons are the ancestors of the entire human race. They were appointed different and complementary roles in marriage as a picture of Christ and the church. God provided for their every need and for their great enjoyment in the Garden, asking of them only the joyous obedience that comes from faith.

[Genesis 1:27, 2:7-9,16-18,21-24, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 5:22-33, Hebrews 11:6]

4. Man's Fall

Adam did not continue in this glad estate; forsaking the obedience that comes from faith, he believed Satan's lie and chose to take what was forbidden, thereby declaring his distrust of the goodness and wisdom of God. By this act, our first parents fell from their original sinless estate.

[Genesis 2:17, 3:1, 4-8, 16-19, Romans 5:12]

All humans descending by ordinary generation from Adam fell in him in such a way that they are by nature objects of God's wrath. Thus, they are all judicially condemned and enslaved to sin. All humans (except those who die in infancy or whose minds are physically damaged to the extent that they cannot comprehend the Gospel) display this nature and enslavement, and are accountable for failing to glorify Him as God, and for choosing to engage in other sinful acts. Furthermore, as a result of Adam's sin, the entire creation was subject to futility, including sickness, decay, calamity, and loss.

[Genesis 3:16-19, John 8:34, Romans 1:18-23, 3:9-18,23, 5:12-19, 6:16-20, 8:20,23, 2 Corinthians 4:16, Ephesians 2:2,3]

5. Man's Redemption

5a: *The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus*

In the fullness of time, God sent to this earth His eternal Son as Jesus the Messiah. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary while she was still a virgin. He thus has two natures, being fully human and fully divine, yet those two natures are united in one person forever. Though He was tempted by Satan and was subject to all the usual trials of humanity, Jesus lived a sinless life. In fulfillment of God's eternal plan of redemption, Jesus voluntarily suffered under Pontius Pilate; He was crucified, He died, and was buried; on the third day He rose from the dead and gave various proofs to hundreds of His followers that He was alive. After forty days He ascended into heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for His people, and reigning until He puts all His enemies under His feet.

[Matthew 1:23, 16:16, 28:6, Mark 15:46, Luke 1:34,35, 4:1-13, 22:69, John 1:1,14,18, 3:16,17, 10:18, 13:1, 19:30-35, Acts 1:3,9-11, 2:23,33, 4:27,28, 5:31, Romans 8:34, 1 Corinthians 15:4-7,25, Philippians 2:6-8, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:13, 2:14,17, 4:15, 7:25]

By His suffering and death on the cross as a substitute, Jesus Christ took upon Himself the punishment deserved by all those who would trust in Him thereafter, as well as all those who were saved prior to the cross. This atonement for sin warrants a universal offering of the Gospel to all persons; whosoever will may come to Christ for cleansing, and whoever does come, He will not cast out.

[John 3:16, 4:13,14, 6:37, Romans 3:24-28, 5:6, 8:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:16, 3:13, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 2:13,14, 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18, Revelation 22:17]

5b: *Election*

Before the creation of the world, God chose for His own possession those who would be holy and blameless before Him, to the praise of His glory. In this unconditional act of free grace, God chose those individuals who would be delivered from sin and made holy in His sight.

[John 6:37-39, 10:25-29, 15:16,19, 17:6,9, Romans 6:17, 8:2,28-30, 9:11-18, 11:5-8, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Ephesians 1:3-14, 2 Timothy 1:9]

5c: Conversion

The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and regenerates these elect, enabling them to hear the Gospel and understand Scripture; seeing the preciousness of Christ and their own unworthiness, they freely choose to repent and believe. Yet without the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would believe; therefore, no one can boast. After conversion, the Spirit dwells in all believers, empowering them to live lives worthy of the calling they have received, to the glory and praise of God.

[Jeremiah 31:33,34, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Matthew 11:27, Mark 1:15, 9:23,24, Luke 5:8, John 3:8, John 6:44, Acts 1:8, 11:18, 16:14, Romans 6:17,18, 15:18,19, 2 Corinthians 3:17,18, 6:16, Ephesians 1:13,14, 2:1-9, 4:1, Philippians 2:12,13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11,12, 2 Timothy 2:24,25, 1 Peter 2:4]

5d: Justification

God justifies – that is, He declares righteous – the ungodly by faith alone apart from works of any kind. Jesus' righteousness, imputed by God to believers, is the sole ground of their acceptance before God.

[Romans 3:21-28, 4:3-11, 5:1,12-19, 8:3,4, 10:4, Galatians 2:16, 3:24, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:8,9, Titus 3:5-7]

5e: Sanctification

Justifying faith does not remain alone, but produces by the work of the Holy Spirit the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. "Faith" that does not yield such fruit is dead, and not true faith.

[Matthew 7:19-27, Acts 26:18, 1 Corinthians 1:30,31, Galatians 5:22,23, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, James 2:17,26, 1 John 2:3,4, 3:14, 4:8,16,20, 5:1]

This sanctification which comes by the Spirit through faith is imperfect and incomplete in this life. Although God frees believers from slavery to sin, there remain remnants of corruption in every person that give rise to continuous war, and call for vigilance in the lifelong fight of faith. But those who are justified will persevere and win this fight by the grace of God, as administered especially through the Word, through prayer, through participation in the ordinances, and through interaction with other believers.

[Psalm 1:1-3, 119:11, Matthew 6:11,12, Mark 13:22, John 10:27-30, 14:13, 17:17, Romans 6:14,17, 8:30, 15:30,31, 1 Corinthians 1:8,9, 15:10, Galatians 5:16-18, Ephesians 1:18,19, 6:17,18, Philippians 1:6, 3:12, 4:6,7, Colossians 1:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 5:23,24, 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 2:13, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 4:7,8, Hebrews 3:12-13, 4:12, James 1:5-8, 1 Peter 1:5, 2:11, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 John 1:8-10, 2:1,19]

6. The Church

There is one universal Church, consisting of all from every time and place who are united to Christ in one Body through faith, with Christ Himself as the Head. The ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God in the ever-increasing gladness of worship.

Today, the Church is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world.

[Psalm 67, Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 1:22, 3:6, 3:10, 4:15,16, 5:23, Colossians 1:18, 1 Timothy 3:15, 2 Timothy 4:14, Revelation 5:9-12]

The Church universal manifests itself in local assemblies, in which believers covenant together to glorify God through hearing the Word proclaimed, engaging in corporate worship, practicing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, building up each other's faith, holding each other accountable to the

obedience of faith, relieving the poor, and spreading the Gospel. In these local assemblies each believer should find a ministry appropriate for his Spirit-bestowed gifts.

[Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, 11:23-26, 12:7, 14:26, 16:19, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:11,12, 5:18-20, Colossians 3:15,16, 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15, 2 Timothy 4:1,2, Hebrews 3:12,13, James 5:19,20, 3 John 7,8, Jude 20]

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith display their union with Christ in His death and resurrection by being immersed in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism signifies our belonging to the new people of God, our union with Christ's death and resurrection, and our being cleansed from the pollution of sin.

[Matthew 28:19, John 3:23, Acts 2:38, 8:36-39, 18:8, Romans 2:28,29, 4:16, 6:2-5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Galatians 3:7,26,27, Colossians 2:11,12, Hebrews 10:22, 1 Peter 3:21]

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which believers eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood; both elements picture the believer's need to feed on Christ, rather than on the things of this world. This ordinance is done in remembrance and hopeful expectation of the return of the Lord, proclaiming His death until He comes.

[Matthew 26:26-28, Luke 22:19,20, John 6:53-57, 1 Corinthians 10:16,17, 11:23-29, 1 John 2:15-17]

Within each local assembly, God raises up men with leadership gifts to serve as pastor-elders in the ministry of the Word and prayer. The local assembly recognizes and affirms this divine calling. Women are not called by God into this role, but use their gifts in other appropriate roles that build up the body and spread the Gospel.

[Acts 6:4, 14:23, 18:26, 20:28-31, Romans 16:1-6, Ephesians 4:11,12, 1 Timothy 2:12, 5:17, Titus 1:5, 2:3-5, 1 Peter 5:1-3]

7. The Great Commission

The commission given by Christ to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church until the end of the age. The task is to proclaim the Gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, baptizing and teaching those who believe, and gathering them into local assemblies to continue the spread of the Gospel especially among their own people, thereby bringing joy to the nations, and worship and praise to God.

[Psalm 67, Matthew 28:18-20, John 4:23, Acts 14:23, Romans 1:5, 15:8-11, Revelation 5:9]

8. The End of the Age

At the end of the age, Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory. He will usher in His kingdom, judging the living and the dead. He will assign those who suppressed the truth in unrighteousness to everlasting, conscious misery. But the righteous will dwell in the redeemed creation in resurrected and glorified bodies, living lives free of sorrow and pain. The righteous will experience ever-increasing happiness and ever-deeper worship, as God displays to them more and more of His infinite and inexhaustible greatness and glory.

[Psalm 16:11, Daniel 12:2, Matthew 3:12, 25:23,46, Mark 9:43-48, 13:26,27, 14:61,62, John 3:16, Acts 1:9-11, Romans 1:18, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 15:22-24, 51-57, Ephesians 2:6,7, Philippians 3:20,21, 1 Thessalonians 5:2,3, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, 2 Timothy 4:1, Titus 2:13, Jude 24,25, Revelation 5:11-14, 14:11, 21:1-8]