

# Gospel Convictions

## A call to evangelical integrity in truth and life

~~In~~ ~~Knowing from~~ Scripture, ~~God teaches us~~ that true life is to be found only in the knowledge of ~~the true and living~~ God, ~~who is Father, Son~~ and ~~Holy Spirit~~. ~~It also warns us~~ that the times we live in will be marked by doctrinal error and godless living, ~~we hereby~~. ~~We therefore~~ commit ourselves to proclaim and contend for the following teachings of the Bible. ~~We are, being~~ convinced that these truths express not only the liberating faith once for all delivered to the saints, but the points at which that faith is under threat at the present time.

### *1. The truth and centrality of the gospel of Jesus, the crucified and risen Christ.*

The gospel is the momentous news concerning God's divine Son, who was sent into the world by his Father and who became the man Jesus Christ. The gospel declares that Jesus ~~is God incarnate, that he~~ lived a sinless life, that he died on the cross to bear God's righteous anger at us because of our sin, and that he was bodily raised from death and exalted to the right hand of God as the Lord and Ruler of the world (i.e. 'the Christ'). According to this same gospel, Jesus Christ will return as judge of the living and the dead, bringing eternal punishment on those who ~~do have~~ not ~~obey~~ obeyed him, but ~~forgiveness of sins~~, salvation ~~from wrath~~ and eternal life to all who ~~repent~~ have repented and put their trust in him. The gospel thus commands a twofold response: turning back from our rebellion against God to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord (repentance), and trusting in the risen Christ alone for forgiveness of ~~sins~~ sins and ~~salvation in the day of judgement~~ eternal life (faith).

This gospel of Christ crucified demonstrates the wondrous love and righteous-ness of God, and reveals his eternal plan to unite all things in heaven and on earth under one head, even Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glory and grace. By the proclamation of this gospel, God is gathering from every nation a people for his own possession—a people who are justified by Jesus' blood and zealous for good works.

Accordingly, we are opposed to any teaching that denies the unique and universal Lordship of the risen Christ as the only name under heaven by which people must be saved, that rejects the penal substitutionary atonement of the ~~eross~~ Cross, or that diminishes the reality of future judgement and hell. We also oppose any practice of Christian ministry that displaces the clear, faithful and frequent speaking of this gospel in favour of other emphases, such as social action or personal ~~growth~~ fulfilment, or that promises salvation without personal repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We also resist the call to any ~~Christian~~ 'unity' that is not based on the truth of this gospel.

### *2. The necessity of the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit to initiate and enable repentance and faith.*

In view of the universal sinfulness and spiritual deadness of ~~humanity~~ all people, only the inward life-giving work of God's Holy Spirit can open ~~people's~~ our eyes to the truth of the gospel, and initiate repentance and faith (these being also the basic ongoing

responses to God's grace throughout the Christian life). All Christian believers are baptized in the Spirit, and by his power, are born again to ~~a new~~ eternal life with God as our Father and Jesus as our Lord. The Spirit leads us to put to death the misdeeds of the body and to produce the fruit of holy living, and He unites us as one new humanity body in Christ, and draws us together in local assemblies to love and encourage one another.

Accordingly, we reject any teaching that denies God's predestining sovereignty in bringing believers to new birth by his Spirit, and we oppose the worldliness that resists the Spirit's leading towards daily holiness. ~~We are also opposed to any teaching about the Spirit's work that effectively divides Christians into different classes according to their level of emotional experience, their exercise of any miraculous gift, their achievement of ongoing victory over sin, or their experience of a second blessing or 'baptism of the Spirit', and love of our neighbour.~~ While affirming the powerful and miraculous work of God by his Spirit in our world today, we are opposed to any teaching that divides Christians according to their experience of the Spirit— whether on the basis of a so-called 'second blessing' or 'baptism' or 'filling' of the Spirit, or a higher level of emotional experience, or the exercise of miraculous gifts such as 'speaking in tongues', or the claim of complete victory over sin in this life.

*3. The assurance of salvation that belongs to those who have been justified by the blood of Jesus and sealed by his Spirit.*

Those who by the Spirit's work ~~rest their confidence~~ trust in Christ's blood alone ~~for justification~~ are fully assured of their right standing now justified before God, ~~their possession of~~ are given eternal life and are assured of their ~~ultimate~~ salvation at the Last Day. ~~While~~ This true living faith will always lead to the good works God has prepared for us to do, ~~but~~ these good works ~~have no part in winning~~ do not earn our salvation, either now or on the Last Day.

Accordingly, we are opposed to any teaching that undermines ~~the~~ assurance of salvation for believers, either by denying our present justification, or by questioning our experience of the Spirit, or by ~~adding~~ requiring the performance of certain religious ~~or moral works~~ observances as necessary for salvation.

*4. The authority and sufficiency of the God-breathed Scriptures for gospel truth and life.*

The gospel of Jesus Christ is ~~foreshadowed~~, revealed and explained in the writings of the Old and New Testaments. All the words of the Bible are God's words. They are not only true, reliable and authoritative, but God's sufficient means for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training his people in every age. Whatever else it may entail, or however it may be supported, all Christian evangelism and ministry centres on the prayerful speaking of the Bible's truth.

Accordingly, we refute any view that diminishes the Bible's authority, such as those who place the Bible under the authority of the Church or scholarship. We also oppose the claim that sections of Scripture are erroneous (e.g. in rejecting the bodily resurrection of Christ) or no longer relevant (e.g. in denying the continuing validity of biblical gender distinctions or the Bible's teachings on sexual morality). We also stand opposed to any who reject the Bible's sufficiency by claiming access to new or fresh

revelation— whether by ecstatic experience, words of knowledge, meditative contemplation, church councils or liturgical ritual.

*5. The tension of gospel living in the world today.*

As those living between the resurrection and return of Christ, we rejoice and give thanks for all the good gifts we receive from God's hand in creation, ~~and~~. We also count it all joy when we suffer the inevitable trials, illnesses and persecutions of this present evil age. ~~In God's kindness, such trials prove and strengthen our trust in Christ. Our longing and hope is, knowing that in his goodness, God uses them to prove and strengthen our faith. In the midst of our trials, we entrust ourselves to God and devote ourselves to doing good, confident that he will deliver us, either now or in the age to come. We long~~ for the resurrection of the dead and the new creation, which God will bring decisively in his own secret time at the return of Jesus Christ ~~at the return of Jesus Christ~~, and in which all the blessings won by Christ will be experienced in their fullness, including freedom from sickness, pain, injustice, poverty and death.

Accordingly, we stand opposed to the 'social gospel', the 'prosperity gospel' and the 'healing gospel'—all of which falsely seek to draw into this age the blessings of the next. We also lament ~~that~~ how many are in love with this present world and its pleasures, rather than longing for the age to come.

*6. The urgency of gospel living in the world today.*

By their nature, these glorious gospel truths demand not only to be proclaimed and contended for, but also to be lived. To assent to these truths without also enacting them in our lives is neither to understand them nor really to believe them.

Thus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with our hearts compelled by the love of Christ, we declare our determination to:

- abandon our lives to the honour and service of Christ in daily holiness and decision-making
- pray constantly in Christ's name for the fruitfulness and growth of his gospel
- speak the Bible's life-changing word whenever and however we can—in the home, in the world and in the fellowship of his people.

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