

What We Teach - by GCBC Elders

1. The Five Solas of the Reformation - Overarching Guiding Principles

Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone is our ultimate authority and standard (2 Tim 3:14-4:2, Isa 8:20, Ps 19, 119)
Soli Deo Gloria - to God alone be all glory, none to us, in salvation and all of life (Rom 11:33-36, Eph 1:11-14)
Sola Gratia – The gospel of salvation is by grace alone, all of God, nothing of man (Eph 2, Rom 4-5, 2 Tim 1:9)
Sola Fide - The gift of grace in salvation is received by faith alone, not of works or merit (Eph 2:8-9, Rom 4:16)
Solo Christo - Christ alone is Savior (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12) and should be the ultimate focus of all we do (Col 1-2)

2. Holy Scripture and Revelation - We believe that Almighty God has revealed all that is necessary to life and salvation (2 Tim 3:15-17) in the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture, which alone are the Word of God. All Scripture was given by verbal plenary (in all of its very words in the original) inspiration of God (2 Tim 3:16), is infallible and inerrant and sufficient (Ps 19:7-8) for all of life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3), and is the final arbiter in all disputes (Acts 17:11; Isa 8:20). Its authority is derived from its Author and not from the opinions of men (2 Pet 1:20-21, Matt 12:1-12). It is to be interpreted according to normal literal, historical, grammatical hermeneutics (interpretation) within its contexts (Isa 28:9-10; Neh 8:7-8; Mt 19:3-6, 22:29-32, 2 Pet 3:16-17). We believe the gift of apostle or prophet (Eph 4:8, 11) and related revelatory miraculous gifts (1 Cor 12:1, 28-31) were uniquely for the founding of the NT church (Eph 2:20) and to attest God's spoken word (Heb 2:3-4; Acts 5:12-21; 2 Cor 12:12) before the completion of Christ's sufficient final written Word, which warns against new revelation or extra-biblical prophecies (Rev 22:18-21; Heb 1:1-2; 2 Pet 1:16-2:3; Prov 30:6).

3. God and the Trinity - We believe in the one true and living God (Jn 17:3), in three persons (equal yet distinct: Jn 17:1, 1:1-3, 14, 18; 10:30, 14:9-11, 16, 26): the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19-20; 3:16-17), who is invisible, personal, omnipresent (all-present), eternal, dependent on none, unchanging, truthful, trustworthy, almighty, sovereign, omniscient (knowing all things), righteous, holy, good, loving, merciful, long-suffering and gracious (1 Tim 1:17, Ps 145).

4. Creation and Marriage – We believe marriage is a creation-based institution only for one man and one woman in a covenant bond for life as the context for intimacy (Matt 19:3-9, Heb 13:4). God created man and woman equal (Gen 1:27-28; Gal 3:28) but different in complementary roles (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:22-33). God created the universe in 6 literal days (Ex 20:11) and created man and woman to glorify and enjoy God as their chief purpose (Isa 43:7, 44:23, 65:18; Ps 89:12). See also What We Teach on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Human Life.

5. Adam, The Fall and Its Effects - We believe that God made our first father Adam perfect, holy and upright (Gen 1-2, Ecclesiastes 7:29). He was appointed representative and head of the human race, thereby exposing all his offspring to the effects of his obedience or disobedience to God's commands (Gen 2:15-17; Hosea 6:7; Rom 5:12-19). We believe that Adam fell from his original righteousness into sin and brought upon himself and all his offspring death (Gen 3, Gen 5; 1 Cor 15:22), condemnation and a sinful nature (Rom 5:12, 17-19; Ps 51:5, 58:3).

6. Man's Radical Sinfulness - Sin radically corrupts not only man's actions (Rom 3:12), but his will (Rom 3:11), heart (Gen 6:5; Jer 17:9), and desires (John 8:44; as man is a slave to sin [John 8:34] who does not seek God [Rom 3:11] or receive His truth [John 8:43, 45, 14:17; 1 Cor 2:14, 2 Cor 4:4]). Fallen man cannot do anything to save himself (Matt 19:25-26), please God (Rom 8:8), or change his radically depraved condition (Jer 13:23; Eph 2:1-3) apart from sovereign grace (Eph 2:4-9; John 6:44, 65, 3:27, 15:5b), and left to himself, he does not even truly want to (John 3:19, 5:40, 8:44).

7. Election - We believe that God, before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-5), for His own glory (Eph 1:6) did elect a great multitude of men and women (Rev 7:9) to eternal life (2 Thess 2:13; Rom 8:30, 34) as an act of free and sovereign grace (Rom 9:15, 11, 21, 11:5-6; Eph 1:5-6, 11). This election was in no way dependent upon His foresight of human merit (1 Cor 1:26-29), works (Rom 11:5), faith or decision (Rom 3:11, 9:16; John 1:13, 15:16). Man's responsibility is equally emphasized and balanced in scripture (in the same books and contexts, [John 1:12; Eph 2:8; Rom 10:9-17, etc.]).

8. Christ Our Representative - We believe that God sent His Son into the world (John 3:16-17), conceived of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34-35; Gal 4:4a), unchangeably sinless (Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22), both God (John 1:1, 14, 10:30; Col 1:19) and man (1 Tim 2:5; Phil 2:7-8), born under the law (Gal 4:4b), to live a perfect life of righteousness on behalf of His elect people (Matt 3:15, 5:17; Rom 3:21-26, 10:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26-28).

9. Particular Redemption - We believe that God's Son died at Calvary to effect propitiation (a payment to satisfy God's wrath, Rom 3:25), atonement (removing God's wrath, Lev 17:11), reconciliation (Rom 5:10), and redemption (making a slave a son, Gal 4:5) for His elect people ('called' [Heb 9:15], or 'predestined' [Eph 1:5-7], or 'His people' [Ps 111:9]). God bore testimony to His acceptance of His Son's work by raising Him bodily from the dead (Acts 2:22-33, 17:31). The sacrifice of Christ is not limited in its value (1 Pet 1:18-19), sufficiency (1 John 2:2, 1 Tim 4:10, John 1:29), or worth (Rev 5:9), but in its intent (for His 'sheep' [John 10:11], His 'own' [10:14-15, 13:1], His 'friends' [15:13], His 'church' [Acts 20:28], His bride [Eph 5:25], God's 'children' [Eph 5:1-2], the 'many' [Isa 53:11-12], etc.) it was an actual vicarious penal (life-giving and legal) substitution that fully atoned in a redemptive-salvation sense for all who would believe (Jn 3:14-16)

10. The Ascension of Christ - We believe God's Son ascended to the right hand of His Father and is enthroned in glory, where He intercedes on behalf of His people and rules over all things for their sake (Rom 8:33-34; Heb 7:25, 12:2).

11. Effectual Grace - We believe that God the Son has poured out the Holy Spirit to work alongside the preached Word (Acts 2, 10, etc.). The Spirit of God regenerates (makes alive, Jn 6:63; Titus 3:3-5; 1 Cor 12:3b) elect sinners and God draws effectually to Christ (Jn 6:37, 44, 65; Lk 15:4-7; Ps 65:4) so a formerly depraved sinner is now willing to believe (2 Cor 4:6; Acts 16:14; Ps 110:3). The spiritually dead are sovereignly given life (Eph 2:1-5; 1 Pet 1:3; Jn 3:5-8, 5:21), a heart of stone is replaced with a new heart (Ezek 11:19), as well as a new nature with new desires (2 Cor 5:17).

12. Justification - We believe the elect, who are called by grace, are justified in the sight of God (Rom 8:30-34) on account of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is received by faith alone (Rom 3-4). It is a legal forensic (judicial) declaration of righteousness at a point in time rather than a process (Rom 5:1, 8:1-2, 8:33-34). True saving faith is accompanied by repentance (Mk 1:15; Acts 20:21), a recognition of the Lordship of Christ and His rightful rule and claims on our life, and a forsaking of sin (Rom 10:9-10, 6:12-14). It is not a mere work of man, but is in fact a gift of God's grace (both faith [Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29] and repentance [Acts 5:31, 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25]), for which He gets all of the credit and all of the glory (Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 4:7) as He produces fruit and evidences of a changed life (Gal 5:22-23).

13. Perseverance - We believe that all who are regenerated (Rom 8:9, 16), called and justified (8:30) shall persevere (8:25, 15:5; Matt 24:13) in holiness (Heb 12:7-14) and never finally fall away (Heb 10:36-39). True believers are secure because of the preservation of God (John 10:28-29; Rom 8:36-39; Eph 1:13-14; Jude 24; 1 John 5:13-18).

14. Evangelism - We believe it is the calling of every local church to participate in fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded us (Matt 28:18-20).

15. The Church - We believe that the local church is under the authority of Christ alone (Eph 1:22). Nevertheless, He has appointed men to be Elders (under-shepherds who shepherd the flock of Christ [1 Pet 5:1-3], biblically synonymous with overseers/bishops/pastors [Titus 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28]) to represent Him as they care for His body (Acts 20:28). Deacons also serve Christ as His ministers of mercy (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim 3; Phil 1:1). Furthermore, the communion of saints requires the recognition of and fellowship with other local evangelical churches (Phil 1:18, 27). It is our conviction that the biblical pattern for church government is loving leadership by a plurality and equality of godly Elders, continually qualified based on 1 Tim 3; Titus 1. Women have important ministries in the church as well, and can teach women (Titus 2) or children, but women are not to preach or teach biblical truth to men or exercise authority over men in that context (1 Tim 2:11-13).

16. Church Ordinances - We believe that baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are gospel ordinances (instituted by Jesus in the gospels; Matt 26:26-28, 28:19; 1 Cor 11:23-26) belonging only to regenerated believers.

17. Eschatology - We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to raise the dead bodily, both righteous and unrighteous, and that the righteous shall enjoy everlasting life and the wicked endure everlasting conscious punishment (Matt 9:47-48, 13:41-50, 25:41-45; Lk 16:23-28; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 20). It is our belief that God has a future for Israel and the nations (Rom 11) and that the return of Christ will be followed by His earthly reign as described in the prophets (Zech 14, Rev 20-22). For us, full agreement on some of the finer points of doctrine (ex: timing of rapture or exact nature of the millenium/kingdom after Christ returns, 2 Pet 3:11-18) are not requirements for membership, fellowship, leadership, or ministry partnerships with others who share our high view of God, His Word, and the gospel, and who agree not to be divisive or to speak or teach here contrary to our doctrinal convictions (2 Cor 13:11; Phil 2:1-2; 1 Pet 3:8; Eph 4:2-7).

What We Teach on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Life

We teach the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman, as created by God, in a single, exclusive union (Matt. 19:4-9), in a public, formal and officially recognized covenant (Mal. 2:14, Prov. 2:17), to picture Christ and His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22-33). We teach God designed sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Heb. 13:4), and that departures from God's design are sinful, including adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual or transsexual conduct, incest, pornography, etc. (1 Thess 4:3-8; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 1:24–32; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10; Lev. 18:1–30; Deut. 22:5). We teach while these and other sins are offensive to God, there is redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ for all who confess and forsake their sin to follow Christ, and we teach every forgiven sinner "in Christ" is a "new creation" (1 Cor. 6:9–11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Acts 3:19-20; Pr. 28:13; Ps. 103:3, 12; Col. 2:13–14, 3:5-10).

We teach that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary sexes/genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and this biblical and biological design is not to be rejected (Gen. 1:26-27). We teach the dignity and sanctity of all human life, including the pre-born, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death (Gen. 9:6; Ps. 139:13-16). We teach every person as created in God's image must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity, and we teach that abuse, hate or harassment of individuals is to be repudiated as contrary to Scripture (Jas. 3:9-10, 2:8-9). We teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture, including the call to repentance for sin, does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of our loving mission to the world (Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 28:16–20; Acts 20:27; 2 Cor. 5:11–20; 2 Tim. 4:1–2).