

Week 2: The church and the word of her Lord

Now that we have seen some of the most important relationships in the church, we will examine the word of our Lord and how it directs our relationships.

Part 1: According to Psalm 1:1, what does the blessed man avoid?

On the other hand, what does he do according to Psalm 1:2?

In Psalm 1:3, what happens in his life as a result of his meditation on God's word?

On the other hand, what are evil people like in Psalm 1:4?

And in Psalm 1:5-6, what are the eternal consequences of meditating on God's word?

Read Matthew 7:24-27 and compare the following:

The construction and foundation of the two houses

The end of the two houses

The two men

The relationship of the two men with Jesus' words

(Personal) What do you do to enjoy the blessing of Psalm 1 and to build a stable house (or life)?

Part 2: Read the first part of John 15:10. How do we show our love to Jesus Christ?

Read John 20:31 and 1 John 1:3-4. Why did God give us the Bible?

(Personal) What role does the Bible play in your love of Jesus Christ and your relationships with other believers?

Part 3: What does 1 Timothy 3:15 tell us about the church and truth?

What does 2 Timothy 3:16 tell us about all Scripture? And why is it useful?

Therefore, according to 2 Timothy 3:17, how does the study of God's word impact a person's life?

And in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, what must Timothy do (and all faithful pastors in a church) with God's word? And according to the same verses, to whom must Timothy (and all pastors) render an account for his management of God's word?

According to 2 Timothy 4:3-4, how will many people react even when their pastors remain faithful to the Lord in their preaching of His word?

Even in that situation, what must the faithful servant of the Lord do in 2 Timothy 4:5?

Reconsider the verses that we've studied this week: Psalm 1; Matthew 7:24-27; John 15:10; 20:31; 1 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:16 – 4:5; and 1 John 1:3-4. Based on these verses, what responsibilities to all church members have to the words of their Lord?

In agreement with 2 Timothy 3:16-17, our church is committed to the **systematic**, **expository** and **practical** preaching of God's word.

- "Systematic" means that our intention is the study the entire Bible verse-by-verse because "all Scripture is inspired by God."
- "Expository" means that we concentrate on explaining God's word and making it clear "to teach, reprove, correct and train in all righteousness."
- "Practical" means that we preach for the production of good fruit in the life of a believer, "so that the man of God would be perfect, completely prepared for every good work."

For all of these reasons we require that all church members actively and regularly participate in the study of God's word through Sunday School and regular attendance at preaching (Sundays or Thursdays) as their situations allow.

Also notice that we have summarized the basic doctrines of our church in the document below. Please read it and write down any question or doubt that you have. If you want, you can visit the church's website: www.LafeenCristo.org, and click on "La declaración de la fe". There all of these doctrines are explained in greater detail with quotes from the Bible verses where they are found.

Also remember that our declaration of faith in no way intends to replace the Bible nor compare itself in authority with the Bible; it is simply a summary of some of the main doctrines of the Bible. It always submits to the Bible's authority.

THE EXTRACT OF THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

In the years 2000 – 2003 Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, pastored by Dr. John Piper, developed and accepted an official declaration of faith. It serves them as a declaration of faith common to all church members, as an affirmation of unity in the teachings of all the elders of the church and as a requirement for the naming of all future elders.

We have translated it into Spanish for the purpose of summarizing, uniting and protecting the teaching of our congregation and to serve as our declaration of faith. The Bible is our only and sufficient guide for everything that pertains to God and righteous living before Him; this declaration of faith simply gives a concise summary of the most outstanding and necessary doctrines of the Bible. It always maintains complete submission to the Bible, the only perfect expression of God's revelation.

Although we would prefer that everyone in our church read all 50 pages and 299 footnotes of the whole declaration of faith, we realize that not everyone will be able to do so. Therefore we've summarized some of its most essential affirmations in the extract here in your hands. If you have a question or doubt about any section, or if you want to read the Bible verses that support these declarations, please read the corresponding section in the complete declaration of faith – there you will find a more detailed explanation. All in all, may this extract, just like the declaration of faith itself, serve as a tool to appreciate God more deeply, grow in your personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ, and value the Bible, His sufficient revelation.

1. Scripture, the written word of God

The Bible is God's sufficient and infallible word, fully and verbally inspired by God and without error in its original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority to evaluate all propositions on truth, justice and what is right.

2. The Trinity, one God in three Persons

We believe in one living, sovereign and all-glorious God who exists eternally in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Deity is fully and completely God.

3. The purpose and eternal election of God

We believe that God from eternity freely, fully and unchangingly has ordained and known all that happens, and we believe that He sustains and governs the entire universe. By His grace in election, He chose before the foundation of the world all who would be saved in His Son Jesus Christ.

4. The creation of the universe and man

We believe that God created the universe and everything in it, from nothing, by the power of His word. He created Adam from the dust of the earth and Eve from his side, the historical parents of all human beings, and made them equal in His image. In His love and wisdom, God gave them different and complementary positions in marriage as husband and wife to be a symbol of Christ and His church. God created them to glorify Him in all things.

5. Man's sin and his fall from communion with God

We believe Adam and Eve sinned through temptation from Satan. Because he was the head of all human beings, Adam's fall was the fall of all of us to the point that we are all corrupt by nature, slaves to sin and morally incapable of glorifying God.

All enmity and suffering in the world today is an echo and testimony to the extremely great moral depravity in the human heart. Every new day of life is a gift of God's mercy to direct us to repentance.

6. Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, was sent by the Father and became flesh when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was later given birth by the virgin Mary. He is truly God and truly man in one Person without mixture or confusion.

We believe that Jesus Christ suffered of His own will to fulfill the plan of God in redemption. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried and on the third day rose from among the dead. He ascended corporally into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father in intercession for His people and where He reigns until He has put all enemies under His feet.

7. The saving work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died in our place, the Just for the unjust: He took our punishment, propitiated God's just wrath against us, vindicated God's righteousness in our justification and removed the condemnation of the law against us.

In obedience to Jesus Christ we joyfully offer the gospel to all nations so that we can say to each person: God gave His only-begotten Son so that all who believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.

We believe that Christ's death obtained more than a genuine invitation of the gospel to all: it also obtained the infallible and efficacious work of the Spirit who triumphs over all resistance and brings them to saving faith.

8. The saving work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that after Christ made atonement for our sin and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit, the promise of the Father to His church. The mission of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected through the preaching of the gospel. Without the efficacious work of the Spirit through the gospel, nobody would come to faith because all are dead in their trespasses and sins. In God's elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, awakens the spiritually dead, removes their blindness and manifests Christ in an irresistible and supremely attractive way to their regenerated hearts.

9. Justification by God

We believe that Christ's perfect righteousness and His satisfaction for sins on the cross are the only foundation of our redemption. In a free action of righteous grace, God justifies sinners by faith alone apart from works. He forgives sins and also counts us righteous and acceptable in His presence.

Faith is the only means by which we sinners are united with Christ. Faith alone receives God's justification, but it never remains alone: by the Holy Spirit it always produces the fruit of love and holiness.

10. The work of God in faith and sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the work through which God transforms the justified soul of the believer into the image of Jesus Christ. In this life we never will be sanctified perfectly or completely, but definitely will reflect the glory of Jesus Christ more and more through the work of the Spirit by God's grace.

We believe that all who are justified by God will persevere in the faith and never will be defeated by the enemy of their souls.

11. Living by the word of God in meditation and prayer

We believe that the Spirit of God awakens faith and sustains it by the Bible and prayer. We fight the good fight of faith principally by meditating on the Scriptures and by asking God in prayer to apply them to our hearts. Prayer is an indispensable companion to meditation on God's word, and through that means, God sanctifies His people, sends workers of the gospel throughout the world, causes His word to be spread and gives victory over Satan and unbelief.

12. The church of Christ and its ordinances

We believe that God's will is that His universal Church be expressed in local churches. Local churches are formed by believers who agree to hear the proclamation of God's word, praise God in unity and practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. In local churches believers build one another's faith through ministries of love to the needy, by encouraging one another to obedience in the faith, and by participating in local and worldwide evangelism.

We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord through which all those who have repented and come to faith in Him declare their union with Christ in His death and resurrection by immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Lord's supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which believers meet to eat bread that represents the body of Christ given for His own and drink the cup of the Lord that represents the new covenant in His blood. We do this in memory of the Lord and in this way proclaim His death until His second coming.

13. The commission of Christ to make disciples of all nations

We believe that the Lord commanded us to proclaim His gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, to baptize them and teach them to keep everything the Lord has commanded us, and to gather them in local churches capable of fulfilling His call to their entire nation.

14. The death, resurrection and second coming of the Lord

We believe that when Christians die, they are made perfect in holiness, received in paradise and taken consciously to Christ's presence which is more glorious and of greater satisfaction than any experience on the earth.

On the last day, Jesus Christ will suddenly come to earth personally, visibly and physically in power and great glory. He will gather His own, raise the dead, judge the nations and establish His kingdom. We believe that the righteous will enter the eternal joy of their Lord, and the unjust will be sent to burning, conscious and eternal condemnation.

15. The spirit of this affirmation and the unity of the church

Our goal in this declaration of faith is to encourage a heartfelt obedience to the Bible for the glory of its Author. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the solid meat of doctrine centered on God in all the fullness of truth: therefore we do not seek the minimum that a Christian may believe but desire to recognize and teach the entire counsel of God.

We do not suppose our infallibility in this affirmation but only the infallibility of the Bible: therefore we receive the refinement and correction of the Holy Scriptures. We firmly believe the doctrines presented here and invite others to examine the Scriptures to see if they are true or not.