

Personal Statement of Faith

1. Basis of my faith

I boldly confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and both Lord and Savior of the world. As scripture testifies to His miraculous birth, Spirit-filled life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection, I place my faith in these truths - and none other - as the source of my personal salvation. Jesus Christ offers eternal life to all who believe and accept His sacrifice for the atonement of their sin. Those who choose to believe are made new by the power of the Holy Spirit, and are reborn into the family of God. We are welcomed into the life of Christ and the fellowship of other believers, and are governed by His abiding presence to lead lives for His glory alone. I made this decision some 30+ years ago as just a young boy in church, and since that point, have continued to grow in my understanding of the Word, my love for the Church, and my faithful expression of devotion to Jesus. As such, I stand before God now as one who is justified by faith in His son, fully redeemed from sin by His blood, and anointed by His Spirit to fulfill His will for my life.

2. Baptism & Communion

I believe that Baptism and Communion are ordinances that are commanded by scripture to be observed by the Church. They creatively illustrate fundamental truths of Christianity, and provide a means for remembering those truths through public celebration. It seems that there are some things the Lord wants to remain central to our faith expression, and He has equipped us to keep them as such.

Baptism reflects the supernatural transformation that comes with saving grace. We hinge our faith on the historical truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He died and was raised to life

again by the power of God. In the same way, we demonstrate our willingness to follow His example by joining Him in death, so that we might also join Him in resurrection life. Those who choose water baptism are immersed, or symbolically buried, in the water with Christ. This represents death. They are raised up from the water into new life, demonstrating the resurrection power of Christ. This is the proclamation of water baptism, as it retells the same journey from life to death as a testimony for every believer.

And while Baptism carries a tone of public profession, Communion underscores the idea of personal devotion. Those who partake of the Lord's table indicate their intimacy with Him, as He compels us to commune with Him frequently. Furthermore, the symbolism of His body and blood may even be offensive to those who do not know Him intimately enough to understand their supreme value. Nevertheless, the Lord's table extends an open invitation to all who are willing to enter into a faith-filled relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Inerrancy of Scripture

I believe that the bible is the inspired word of God, and therefore, it stands as the final authority concerning all of creation. It is not only trustworthy, but essential for faithful living. For modern translations, the inspiration of scripture is tied to its consistency with the original manuscript in terms of meaning, not grammatical construct. Consequently, problems with translation typically reflect degrees of clarity, rather than superficial grammatical errors. Careful consideration must be taken to ensure the transfer of the author's original intentions, as well as the heart of God on all content. This is best achieved by allowing scripture to interpret itself, as the inspired text will find no conflict across its many authors and variety of contexts. For this

reason, textual criticism and scholarship can never be overlooked as an important function of proving the inerrancy of scripture, as they serve as important guards against heresy.

4. The Work of the Holy Spirit

I believe the presence of the Holy Spirit stands as the sign of genuine redemption within the life of the church. He is the receipt of salvation, serving as ultimate proof that a particular life has been purchased by the blood of Jesus. In addition, He is the active agent in the process of sanctification, urging every believer on to greater depths of devotion, and a clearer reflection of the character of Christ.

If the same Spirit that birthed the church in Acts continues to form it today, it seems appropriate that His approach would prove consistent. The Holy Spirit continues to supernaturally equip the Church for the work of the kingdom. The gifts endowed upon believers are understood to be spiritual tools, not cultural ones, and therefore, their presence and use must coincide with persisting spiritual needs. This dynamic supports the notion that the Lord is building His Church - by His Spirit. The fruit filled lives that scripture promises is dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

5. Called to Ministry

I was volunteering in student ministry for a few years, and began to make significant progress in building relationships with students and becoming a trusted example in the church. At the time, I did not have any plans for ministry - I was simply offering my free time because I was available. In fact, I'm not even sure I had a real concept of ministry as a career option. However, I could not deny that God was doing so much with the little that I invested. Gifting

emerged consistently through volunteerism, and it stood in complete contrast to my engineering job at the time - which I had spent so much time, energy, and money to prepare.

I remember attending a youth ministry conference for the first time and that event changed my life. The main sessions, the breakouts, the worship experience – all of it was a defining moment for me. I recognized that I was in an environment with thousands of other passionate youth leaders, and I never felt so “at home” before in my life. At the same time, I also felt “small” among the thousands of leaders and experts who were there. The Lord knew the insecurity in my heart, because I immediately felt Him impress upon me:

“You belong here, doing this work, for me.”

It was one of the most affirming and satisfying experiences I ever had, and I knew that the Lord wanted me to pursue ministry full time. Shortly after, that word was confirmed for me when our student pastor suddenly transitioned to a different ministry, and I was asked to fill the role.

Accepting the leadership role was not enough to satisfy God, as He intended for me to make a full career transition into ministry. Admittedly, this was difficult to envision, as my church was not in a position to hire a full time student pastor at the moment. It would require an initial investment to build and strengthen the ministry to justify a full time position. After much prayer, many conversations with my wife concerning financial plans, and several confirmations from the Lord along the way, I eventually resigned from that engineering position to commit full time attention to building the student ministry.