

# Grace Church Elizabethtown, KY

## What We Believe

### The Doctrines of Grace

**The Condition of Humanity:** Because of the fall (Genesis 3), we are more sinful than we could ever imagine (Jeremiah 17:9). Not only have we been corrupted by Adam's sin (Romans 5:12-19), but we are also responsible for our own sin. Our nature, in its now corrupted state, not only will not choose to obey the Gospel, it is unable to do so (Romans 3:9-20, 8:5-8). We all are sinners desperately needing God's grace.

**The Initiative of God, the Father:** Because of our inherent brokenness and sin, we need our God to pursue us, which He certainly does. Why does He do this? Because, while we are more sinful than we could ever imagine, we are also more loved than we had ever dreamed! In His grace, God takes the initiative in establishing a relationship with us, reaches down, captures our heart, and invites us into a love relationship with Himself (John 6:37-39, II Thessalonians 2:13-14).

**The Work of Jesus, the Son:** God provided the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. (John 10:14-15, Ephesians 5:25-27). The death of Jesus was a fully effective act of redemption in which we are now called the beloved sons and daughters of the living God.

**The Ministry of the Holy Spirit:** Through the Holy Spirit, God is in the business of transforming lives. The Holy Spirit does this by convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ and by capturing our hearts with the love and mercy of God (Ezekiel 36:25-27). The Spirit of God opens our eyes to the beauty of Jesus Christ (John 6:44-45, Philippians 2:13) and of His grace and affection to our souls.

**The Promise of the Gospel:** He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it (Phil. 1:6) Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God has promised His love for you — and He will keep that promise. No matter your failure, no matter your struggle, He will never let you go. The Gospel is not about “believing in Jesus and then keeping your moral, ethical or theological ducks in a row”. We don't become perfect just because we are followers of Jesus. Rather, we seek to conform our lives to His holiness out of gratitude for His affection for us. None of us will do this perfectly, most of us will often not even do this very well, but the grace of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus sustains us.

## Historic Christian Doctrine

We count ourselves as part of God's "holy, catholic (meaning universal), and apostolic Church" and hold to those basic teachings which have been believed by all Christians throughout history that have proclaimed historic Christianity. These teachings have been confessed in the ecumenical creeds of the early church such as the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds.

These are some of the foundational teachings of the historic Christian faith:

- The Trinity (one God in three persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
- The Incarnation (that Jesus is both God and man).
- The Atonement (that Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead in order to save sinners).
- The Resurrection (that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead and is the first-fruits of the restoration of all of His creation).

## Apostolic Doctrine

By "apostolic," we are referring to those doctrines taught by the apostles in the Scriptures and so forcefully reclaimed in the Reformation of the 16th century. We believe that the Scriptures as found in the 66 books of the Bible are without error in their original writings, completely trustworthy and the ultimate authority for our beliefs and our lifestyles. We believe that salvation is only by God's grace and is received solely by faith in Christ. We believe in the historicity of the biblical miracles, of the virgin birth, and in the reality of Christ's return.

## Reformed & Confessional Doctrine

We believe that God is sovereign in all things, including salvation, and that the sacraments of baptism and holy communion as established by Jesus Christ not only represent God's grace, but also seal and apply that grace to our lives. We are committed to a Presbyterian system of church government and to living out the implications of God's radical grace in every area of life.

Our church is a confessional church: we affirm a summary of Christian doctrine that our leadership holds as the best summary of Scriptural truth. This is the [Westminster Confession of Faith](#). Distinctives of this document include:

- The Atonement of Christ: Jesus Christ lived the life we should have lived and died the death we deserve to die. His sacrifice is the only merit by which God declares sinners to be righteous in His sight.

- Inerrancy of Scripture: The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inerrant in all it proclaims and is the only authority for faith and practice.
- Total Depravity: All people are not as bad as they could be, but every aspect of our personhood is sinful – our intellect, emotions, and will.
- Bodily Resurrection: God will bring all of history to a goal, an end, which will include a final judgment, resurrection of the body, and the new heavens and the new earth.
- The Primacy of God's Role in Salvation: God is the One Who calls, regenerates, convicts, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. We contribute nothing to our salvation except our sin.