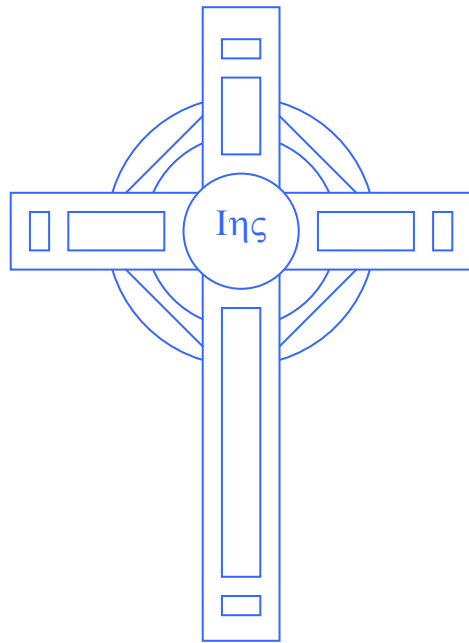


What is the Gospel? (Affirmations and Denials)



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GOSPEL AFFIRMATIONS AND DENIALS

1. We affirm that the gospel entrusted to the Church is, in the first instance, God's Gospel (Mark 1:14; Romans 1:1). God is its author and he reveals it to us in and by his Word. Its authority and truth rest on him alone.

We deny that the truth or the authority of the Gospel derives from any human insight or invention (Galatians 1:1-11). We also deny that the truth or authority of the Gospel rests on the authority of any particular church or human institution.

2. We affirm that the Gospel is the saving power of God in that the Gospel effects salvation to everyone who believes, without distinction (Romans 1:16). This efficacy of the Gospel is by the power of God himself. (1 Corinthians 1:18).

We deny that the power of the Gospel rests in the eloquence of the preacher, the technique of the evangelist, or the persuasion of the rational argument (1 Corinthians 1:21; 2:1-5).

3. We affirm that the Gospel diagnoses the universal human condition as one of sinful rebellion against God, which if unchanged will lead each person to eternal loss under God's condemnation.

We deny any rejection of the fallenness of human nature or any assertion of natural goodness, or divinity of the human race.

4. We affirm that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, the only mediator between, God and humanity (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5).

We deny that anyone is saved in any other way than by Jesus Christ and his Gospel. The Bible offers no hope that sincere worshippers of other religions will be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ.

5. We affirm that the Church is commanded by God and is therefore under divine obligation to preach the Gospel to every living person (Luke 24:47; Matthew 29:18-20).

We deny that any particular class or group of persons, whatever their ethnic or cultural identity, may be ignored or passed over in the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians. 9:19-22). God purposes a global Church made up of people from every tribe, language, and nation (Revelation 7:9).

6. We affirm that faith in Jesus Christ as the divine Word (*or Logos*, John 1:1), the second person of the Trinity, co-eternal and co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:3), is foundational to faith in the Gospel.

We deny that any view of Jesus Christ which reduces or rejects his full deity is Gospel faith or will avail to salvation.

7. We affirm that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (John 1:14), the virgin-born descendant of David (Romans 1:3). He had a true human nature, was subject to the law of God (Galatians 4:5), and was like us at all points, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:17; 7:26-28). We affirm that faith in the true humanity of Christ is essential to faith in the Gospel.

We deny that anyone who rejects the humanity of Christ, his incarnation, or his sinlessness, or who maintains that these truths are not essential to the Gospel, will be saved (1 John 4:2-3).

8. We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.

We deny that any view of the atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

9. We affirm that Christ's saving work included both his life and his death on our behalf (Galatians 3:13). We declare that faith in the perfect obedience of Christ by which he fulfilled all the demands of the law of God in our behalf is essential to the Gospel.

We deny that our salvation was achieved merely or exclusively by the death of Christ without reference to his life of perfect righteousness.

10. We affirm that the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead is essential to the biblical Gospel (1 Corinthians 5:14).

We deny the validity of any so-called gospel that denies the historical reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

11. We affirm that the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone is essential to the Gospel (Romans 3:28; 4:5; Galatians 2:16).

We deny that there is any more than one true Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).

12. We affirm that the doctrine of the imputation (reckoning or counting) both of our sins to Christ and of his righteousness to us, whereby our sins are fully forgiven and we are fully accepted, is essential to the biblical Gospel (2 Corinthians 5:19-21).

We deny that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ infused into us or by any righteousness that is thought to inhere within us.

13. We affirm that the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified is properly his own, which he achieved apart from us, in and by his perfect obedience. This righteousness is counted, reckoned, or imputed to us by the forensic (that is, legal) declaration of God, as the sole ground of our justification.

We deny that any works we perform at any stage of our existence add to the merit of Christ or earn for us any merit that contributes in any way to the ground of our justification (Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

14. We affirm that while all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are in the process of being made holy and conformed to the image of Christ, those consequences of justification are not its ground. God declares us just, remits our sins, and adopts us as his children by his grace alone, and through faith alone, because of Christ alone, while we are still sinners (Romans 4:5).

We deny that believers must be inherently righteous by virtue of their cooperation with God's life-transforming grace before God will declare them justified in Christ. We are justified while we are still sinners.

15. We affirm that saving faith results in sanctification, the transformation of life in growing conformity to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification means ongoing repentance, a life of turning from sin to serve Jesus Christ in grateful reliance on him as the only Lord and Master of our lives (Galatians 5:22-25; Romans 8:4, 13-14).

We deny any view of justification which divorces it from our sanctifying union with Christ and our increasing conformity to his image through prayer, repentance, cross-bearing, and life in the Spirit.

16. We affirm that saving faith includes mental assent to the content of the Gospel, acknowledgement of our own sin and need, and personal trust and reliance upon Christ and his finished work.

We deny that saving faith includes only mental acceptance of the gospel, and that justification is secured by a mere outward profession of faith. We further deny that any element of saving faith is a meritorious work or earns salvation for us.

17. We affirm that although true doctrine is vital for spiritual health and well-being, we are not saved by doctrine. Doctrine is necessary to inform us how we may be saved by Christ but it is Christ who saves.

We deny that the doctrines of the Gospel can be rejected without harm. Denial of the Gospel brings spiritual ruin and exposes us to God's Judgment.

18. We affirm that Jesus Christ commands his followers to proclaim the Gospel to all living persons, evangelizing everyone, everywhere, and discipling believers within the fellowship of the Church. A full and faithful witness to Christ includes the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbor, without which the preaching of the Gospel appears barren.

We deny that the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbors constitutes evangelism apart from the proclamation of the Gospel.