

CRAWFORD AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Our Confession of Faith

Adapted from the 1853 New Hampshire Confession of Faith

I. The Scriptures

We believe the Bible is the very word of God. The 66 books of the Bible are God's exclusive and divine revelation to us, written by God's prophets and apostles by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Bible in its original manuscripts contains truth without any mixture of error, and is fully trustworthy. It is the revelation of God's redemptive story. Therefore, it is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union. The Scriptures are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, teaching, and thought should be tried.

II. The Triune God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Creator and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, glorious in holiness, and worthy of all worship, trust, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but complimentary offices in the great work of redemption.

Ila. Father

The Father is the first member of the Trinity, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace.

Ilb. Son

Jesus, the Son, is coequal, consubstantial (i.e. having the same substance, nature, or essence), and coeternal with the Father. He was with the Father in the beginning and all things were made through Him. He was born of a virgin, becoming fully human that He might succeed where Adam failed and save all those who put their trust in His substitutionary, propitiatory death. He was raised bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will make a personal, visible return to earth.

Ilc. Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who is sent from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe that He is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration; it is His work to indwell, sanctify, instruct, empower for service, and seal until the day of redemption all who believe on Jesus Christ. We believe He indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. In all the divine attributes, He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

III. The Fall of Man

We believe that Adam was a historical figure created in holiness, in the image of God, and under the law of his Creator. By rejecting God, Adam, and all mankind with him, fell from that state, and has ever since been under the curse of sin and death. By nature we lack the holiness required by God; we are inclined to evil and justly condemned under God's eternal wrath, without defense or excuse.

IV. The Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is all of grace, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By the Father's design, Jesus freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and was perfectly obedient to the Father in all things. By His vicarious, substitutionary death He made full atonement for our sins, breaking the curse. Having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven, qualified to be our suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior in every way.

V. Justification

We believe that God justifies the one who places *faith in Jesus. When God justifies, the believer is declared righteous, not according to any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in Jesus' redemptive work. His perfect righteousness is freely imputed (credited) to our account, declaring us simultaneously not-guilty and righteous. This brings us into a state of peace and favor with God.

VI. The Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel, and that it is necessary for all to accept them by obedient faith. The gospel is able to save the greatest sinner on earth, but man refuses the blessing of salvation, when by his own inherent depravity he voluntarily rejects the gospel, which brings upon him just condemnation.

VII. Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. By the power of the Holy Spirit and in connection with the Word of God, regeneration creates in the mind and heart an inclination toward God, securing our voluntary and joyful obedience to the gospel. Its evidence appears in the fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

VIII. Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, accomplished in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. Being deeply convinced of our guilt, and helplessness, and the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God in humility, confessing our sins, and pleading for mercy. At the same time we gladly rely on Jesus as the only and all sufficient Savior, yielding to Him as Lord.

IX. Election

We believe that election in Christ is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign grace, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes all boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of His free mercy. It is the foundation of Christian assurance. All who truly believe the gospel are of the elect.

X. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are partakers of His holiness. It is a progressive work that begins in regeneration and carries on in the hearts of God's people by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord sanctifies us through the continual use of appointed means – especially the Word of God, the community of faith, and prayer.

XI. The Perseverance of Saints

We believe that only those who endure to the end are the true people of God, having their persevering attachment to Christ as the mark which distinguishes them from those who make superficial professions of faith. God's providence watches over their welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.

XII. The Church

We believe that the church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is our Head. We believe the universal church is made up of all true believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ from the beginning of time until the end of time. We believe a local church is a community of believers in Jesus who have covenanted in the faith and fellowship of the gospel regularly gathering for the right preaching of God's Word and rightly practicing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

XIII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in display of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and is required for church membership. By the Lord's Supper the members of the church receive the bread and the cup, proclaiming the good news of Jesus' death on our behalf. We believe that these two ordinances should be solemnly and joyfully observed, administered by the church until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe these ordinances convey saving grace upon the recipient. However, they are means by which God reveals His gospel and by which He brings loving encouragement into the lives of His people.

XIV. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be consistent with the Christian's conscience under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

XV. Marriage

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

XVI. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is ordained by God for the interests and good order of human society. Civil leaders are to be prayed for, honored, and obeyed except in matters opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of conscience and King of kings.

XVII. The World to Come

We believe that this world is fading away and the fullness of God's kingdom is approaching. At the last day Christ will descend from heaven for the final judgment; the dead will rise from the grave, and He will judge the living and the dead. A solemn separation will then take place, the unrighteous facing God's eternal wrath and punishment in hell, and those found righteous in Christ entering an eternal and perfect fellowship with God in a new heavens and new earth.