

# RiverTown Beliefs

**The Bible** | God wrote a book. It is completely true.

The Bible is God's Word to all people. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired word of God and is both infallible and inerrant in the original writings. It is completely sufficient, totally authoritative and always relevant. It's the supreme source of truth for Christians for faith and life.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Matthew 5:18; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 16:12, 13; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

## **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*The Holy Spirit inspired human authors to write the books of the Bible. Every word of Scripture is chosen by God Himself. The Bible is God's love letter to all of humanity and is the final authority in every issue it addresses. It is complete truth, and we can trust it for all matters in this life and eternity. We believe the Bible is God's written revelation to man. It is verbally inspired in every word, is absolutely infallible (it is incapable of having any errors), and is absolutely inerrant (it contains no errors) in the original documents. We affirm the infallibility, inerrancy, sufficiency, and authority of Scripture in all things.*

**The Trinity** | God is Three in One. Father. Son. Spirit.

God has existed in relationship with Himself for all eternity. We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three person; and that these are equal in every divine perfection. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have distinct but harmonious roles in creation, providence and redemption.

Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19,20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5, 6

## **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*The dynamic of God existing as three in one is called the Trinity, and each member of the Trinity is equally deserving of worship and obedience. God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. God is the Sovereign of the Universe. God the Jesus Christ (the Son of God) is the second member of the Trinity who became flesh to reveal God to man and to become the Savior of the lost. The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) is the third member of the Trinity and indwells all Christ-followers. He leads and guides both the church and individual believers as they yield to Him daily in faith. Many people have differing ideas about the nature of God. Most of those ideas have one thing in common - they are the product of human intellect! When it comes to our Creator, it matters very little who we think God is. The Bible is the only perfect source for understanding Him.*

## **God the Father | God is Great. God is Good. He's Supreme. He's Father.**

God the Father is great: He is all-powerful, all-knowing, unchanging, and holy. It is in Him that we live, move and exist. God is good. He is our Father. He is loving, compassionate, and faithful to His people and His promises. We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He perfectly foreknows all that shall come to pass, 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 who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:21, 22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*God is Supreme, and He alone truly satisfies. God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. God is the Sovereign of the Universe. We believe that God is supreme. He alone is God. Besides Him there is no other. That is why He is to be worshiped, enjoyed, and obeyed. His Glory is the purpose for all of life. All things that exist were created by Him and for Him. Everything is sustained and controlled by Him. God is the most important being in the universe. All of life is to be viewed in relation to Him.*

*God created this world out of nothing and controls this world by His awesome and mighty power. He directs history to fulfill His purpose of seeing His glory fill the earth as the nations worship Him. God's will is always done. Even in the midst of tragedy, God directs and controls events to bring good out of the bad for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Simply put, God's sovereignty means that He is the Lord God, and His will is always done. We can live life with confidence knowing that the Sovereign God of the universe is our loving Father, and all that He is in control of all that happens in our lives.*

## **Jesus | Jesus is God in the flesh. He's the Way, the Truth and the Life.**

Jesus Christ lived on this earth and was completely human, but at the same time completely God. He is coequal with the Father and Holy Spirit. He is the only plan for bringing people back into a right relationship with God. He lived a perfect life, so that He could be a substitution for us in satisfying God's demands for perfection. He defeated death in His resurrection so that we could have life. He is coming again. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry as Intercessor, Representative, and Advocate. We believe Jesus is coming again to reign as King.

Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 28:5-6; Luke 22:70; 24:46-47; John 1:1, 14; 10:30; 11:25-27; 17:1-5; Acts 1:9, 10; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 8:1-3; 8:24; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:24;

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*Jesus Christ is God's Son and an equal to the Father. He has eternally existed as God, yet He lived on earth during the first century A.D. two thousand years ago. He is the second member of the Trinity. He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Throughout His earthly life, he was completely God and completely human at the same time. After living a perfect, sinless life, Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for every human being who has ever lived by dying on a Roman cross. After three days in the grave, he defeated sin and death by rising from the grave. He then ascended to Heaven and will return to earth one day to reign as King. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.*

**Holy Spirit** | God the Spirit. For those who believe, He is in us and with us.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus by convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation, and regenerates believers at the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer spiritual gifts. All Christians are to live under His control and influence daily.

John 14:16,17, 26; 15:26, 27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26; Ephesians 5:18

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*The Holy Spirit is a full and equal part of the Trinity. He works in the world to make all people understand their need for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells all Christ-followers. That is to say, He lives inside every follower of Jesus from the moment they believe in Him. Not only does He indwell all Christ-followers, He also leads and guides both the church and individual believers as they yield to Him daily in faith. The Spirit is our power source for life, growth, ministry, and mission. To tap into that power, we must continually yield to the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired the Bible, and through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes believers into the Body of Christ, and indwells believers throughout their Christian lives. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and gives spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. Christians are to live a Spirit-filled life, relying upon the Spirit in living the Christian life. They are to seek to be empowered and led by the Spirit through faith as they live the Christian life. The Spirit thus enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in living out God's purposes. His presence assures us of our relationship with Christ. He guides believers into all truth, and exalts Christ.*

## **Man | Wonderfully Created. Totally Depraved. Beautifully Redeemed.**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that through Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". Sin separates us from God, and is the root cause of all problems in this world and in our lives. They are justly therefore under condemnation. This judgement includes physical, spiritual and eternal death. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. They are also regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures in Christ.

Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Psalm 51:7; Proverbs 28:13; Ecclesiastes 2:11; Jeremiah 17:9; John 1:14; 3:14-16; ; 5:24; 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 8:1; 9:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17; II Thessalonians 1:9; 21:18; Romans 3:19; 5:19; I John 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10;14,15

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*Man was created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him and to be like Him in character. Man is the pinnacle of God's creation and the only being on the earth whom God made in His own spiritual image, with the moral ability to choose right from wrong. Although man has great capability of good, we believe that man is marred by a sinful attitude and heart. Each person is a descendant of Adam. He was not only the first person, but also the first person to sin. Through his DNA, which all humanity shares, we receive a sinful nature. This nature, which each person has, is a tendency towards sin. As a result, each human being has chosen to sin and rebel against God, and is totally incapable of coming back into a right relationship with God by his or her own effort. This attitude of disobedience (called sin in the Bible) – unless rectified through Christ – forever keeps man from forming a relationship with his Creator. This attitude also keeps us from being the kind of person God created us to be. It is only by God's grace and Spirit that man returns to God in faith.*

## **Salvation | By Grace. Through Faith. In Christ. For God's Glory. Period.**

A person becomes a Christian through faith and trust in Jesus. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the only way of salvation through the forgiveness of sin. Salvation is a gift from God and it cannot be earned through our own efforts. It is received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Good works in no way accomplish or aid in salvation. Salvation is accomplished as man is saved through faith in the finished, redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is through faith alone by grace alone in Christ alone according to Scripture alone for the glory of God alone. Saving faith entails turning from sin and self-effort (repentance) and trusting Christ as Lord and Savior (faith).

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24;

2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*We believe that Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection makes salvation possible. The shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, salvation only occurs when a person places his or her faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the sufficient payment for their sin. We believe that the salvation of man, who is sinful and lost, is instantaneous and accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God when the repentant sinner - enabled by the Holy Spirit - places his or her faith in Jesus Christ. Our disobedient and sinful nature has eternally separated us from our Creator. No matter how hard we try, we can never earn our way back into God's presence. Our only hope is to trust Jesus as God's provision for our disobedience. Whenever a person makes that decision, he or she steps into the eternal and abundant life Jesus promises for all believers. We do not inherit our Christianity from our parents, nor is it obtained through any association with the church. It likewise cannot be earned. It is a gift that is to be received through turning from sin (repentance) and trusting Christ as Lord and Savior (faith). It is an individual's decision to receive God's grace through faith. We believe this salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. Man is saved from sin (his core life problem) and made right with God as he is justified by faith alone. Works (including baptism, religion, church attendance, etc.) in no way add to or contribute to man's salvation. Man's good works are the result of salvation; they do not in any way earn or achieve salvation. All the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. Your salvation is through the most trustworthy Being in the universe – Jesus Christ! You didn't do anything to earn your salvation, and you can't do anything to lose it. Your salvation is maintained by God's trustworthiness and love, not by what you do. He will never abandon any of His children. Simply put, God is a perfect, loving Father who does not abandon His children.*

## **God's Purpose of Grace | Salvation is from the Lord and for the Lord.**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He foreknows, predestines, calls, regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31; Jonah 2:6-9; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2; 4:19

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*Salvation is a gift from God, from first to last. Salvation is from the Lord. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has chosen and accepted in Christ, and who have been sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Simply put, we choose Christ because He has first chosen us (John 15:16) and we love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).*

## **The Christian Life | Christ in us, the Hope of Glory.**

We believe that each believer is baptized and indwelt with the Holy Spirit at conversion. We believe that believers are given all that is needed for life and godliness through the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The Holy Spirit sets apart believers and grows them to maturity in Christ. We believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of believers to minister according to the gifts and grace of God that is given to them. Each believer is to be equipped by church leaders, and to in turn have a personal ministry to build up the church. All believers are to share their faith, to seek to make disciples, and to partner with other believers for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Peter 1:3-4.

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*From the moment of our trust in Christ by faith, God begins to set us apart (sanctify us) for the purpose of growing us to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe that every Christian should live for God and not for himself. By obedience to the Word and daily yielding to the Spirit, every believer should mature and become conformed to the image of Christ. Through our faith and trust in God and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, God changes our heart in order to change our character and actions. God's promise is that when we reach heaven, He will complete the process of making every believer like Jesus. We as Christians are to selflessly live missional, other-focused, servant-oriented lives.*

## **The Church | God's People on Mission Reaching God's World.**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all believers throughout the world are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, who come together for worship, ministry and fellowship. The Church is to work together in love and unity, intent on the ultimate purpose of glorifying God by enjoying Him and making Him known to the world.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*The Bible tells us that the church is the body of Christ. We believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. We believe in the autonomy of the local churches, free of any external authority and control. We recognize believer's baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church. The New Testament tells us the church is the family of all believers, which includes each and every believer in every age. This includes true Old Testament believers. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. The biblical purpose of the church is to glorify and enjoy God through worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and ministry to others. We believe that the church is the body of Christ of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The members are those who have trusted by faith the finished work of Christ. Although there are unique, local churches, each Christian and each local church is part of the Universal Church comprised of all true believers in Christ throughout history and all over the world. We look forward to the day when we will be united together in heaven! Each Christian is called to be part of a unique local church that is gospel-believing, Scripturally-sound, Christ-centered church.*

## **The Last Things | Christ Will Come Again. He'll Make All Things New.**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the building of His kingdom. Man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with him is eternal life. Heaven and hell are places of eternal existence.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13

### **WHAT THIS MEANS**

*God created you to exist forever. Heaven is a perfect place in the presence of a perfect God. Since none of us are perfect, we were all headed for an eternity of separation from God. That's why God sent Jesus: to pay the price for our sins so that we can spend eternity with Him. What you decide about Jesus Christ in this life will determine where you will spend eternity. If you reject Him, you'll spend it eternally separated from God in Hell. If you accept Him through faith, you'll spend it eternally with Him in Heaven. Hell is a place of separation, suffering and darkness. Heaven is a place of eternal joy in God's presence. God in His own time and in His own way will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. He will make all things right and new at this time for those who believe.*