

The Mission of God

The following establishes some biblical convictions for asking God to form Redeemer Church into a Gospel Centered Disciple Making Family.

In scripture, God explains that He built the church for His mission and not a mission for His church. The extraordinary mission is to magnify God's glory. God acts to elevate His glory, which involves the totality of His nature, greatness, holiness, righteousness, omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, love, and justice. Isaiah 43:7 states, "Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Clearly, God makes us for His glory. Therefore, we should and are called to elevate God's glory. How can Redeemer Church do this?

The answer lies in understanding the central message of God's word. Often, as Redeemer Church, we talk about being Gospel Centered. What does that mean? Well, let us discuss how God chose to elevate His glory and accomplish His mission. First, let's emphasize that the mission was designed in the mind and heart of God. Thus, the mission is eternal. And graciously, the Church (expressed as local churches) is the vehicle for God's mission to move forward. The mission God laid out in the Bible involves rescuing His chosen people from a life of rebellion, sin, and death and dwelling with Him forever. God has always known His people and wrote their names into the book of life.

Allow me to simplify through elaboration; the mission is for God to dwell with His people. God chose to share His love with mankind. On the surface, this seems relatively straightforward. However, thoughtful inquiry unearths the reality that this task is seemingly impossible for two reasons: God's Holiness and man's sinfulness. Many objections must be satisfied.

- How can God retain His holiness in the presence of sinful man?
- How can a wicked man stand in the presence of a Holy God without utterly perishing?
- If He offers mercy to allow a man to dwell with Him, how could God preserve His commitment to justice by not punishing man's sinful deeds?
- If man's purpose is to live with God, how could man ever gain a right standing before a God with an immutable standard of perfection?



The answers to the hard questions above are what makes the message of Jesus "good news."

God is the only one who can resolve the conflict of man's ultimate purpose to enjoy Him and dwell with God forever. Only God Himself has the infinite resources to atone for the debt of man's rebellious infringement of His holiness and glory. Therefore, our predicament can only be resolved through the theology of the Trinity.

What is the Trinity, you ask? Rather, who is the Trinity? Christians worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Spirit. The Bible articulates the triune Godhead distinctly as that of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all one; the glory equal, the Majesty coeternal.

The offense against a perfectly holy, righteous, omnipotent, omniscient, glorious, eternal, and just God means that the perpetrator owes an endless debt. The endless debt is justly due because of the infinite value of the one true God. The Godhead alone has the tools to resolve man's fallen dilemma.

The God of the Bible decided that the best way to display His character and glory would be to allow His righteous and holy standards to be appeased through faith in the finished work that Jesus accomplished on a Roman cross. Jesus was born of a virgin as mankind's second Adam. He lived life perfectly by loving God and His neighbor. He lived the life mankind was called to live but did not. Then, He willfully chose to die a substitutionary death for rebellious sinners. His death on the cross is the punishment that mankind deserved.

Moreover, God gloriously forgave us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands of pure justice. He set aside our sin debt on Jesus, nailing it to the cross. Therefore, faith in the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and Lordship of Jesus justifies the sinner by a gift of grace alone.

God ordained the death of Jesus for forgiveness and for the just propitiation for man's sin. God poured all the wrath that humanity deserves on Jesus to show God's righteousness, showing that He is both just and the justifier of His people who will, by faith, throw themselves on the mercy of Jesus. Finally, the world has good news from heaven because God's word declares that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Not only are we saved but raised to walk anew with God in free obedience to His words and ways that work for our ultimate good and greatly honor the fame of His glory! Thanks be to God, who gives us the victorious hope and purpose through our Lord Jesus Christ.



The truth of the gospel is the heart of the mission of God. The redeemed share this message to the ends of the earth to partner with God in His mission. Jesus calls us to make disciples. The proclamation of this message is a significant part of Disciple Making. This is not news to most, but it can raise practical questions.

Is Redeemer Church to be on mission as individuals or together? Is disciple making a team or individual challenge? In other words, is disciple making more like golf or football? Answer: we are the church together. We are called to be family, brothers and sisters united to love and honor our Heavenly Father. Christians are citizens of heaven and ambassadors in a foreign land sent to herald the message of peace from God. The Christian's message declares that the King of kings is making for Himself a redeemed people that He alone knows and keeps for His great glory.

The family of God is called to disciple the nations. Discipleship unifies the Church in laboring in the harvest of God as a family of families. Jesus said that "all people will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another." Christians are to gather His people together in unity under the teaching of everything Jesus commanded. He is our lovely, saving, redeeming God and His commands are for our flourishing. It is important to note that after the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, all authority God gave to Him. By this authority, Jesus commands His disciples together to take the message of the gospel to all nations. The mission is God's, but He commissions His disciples to carry out the mission through our declaration of the good news. Therefore, the overarching purpose of everyone who bears the name Christian is to proclaim the message as a family.

While on the mission, the Church is to be organized as a people (not persons) who have and display love for one another. Through our collective faith, we daily remind one another that the message of the cross (the gospel) is the power of God to those who are being saved! He also prayed that His disciples would be so "perfectly one" that the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus. Paul, Luke, and John expand on this teaching by showing how the unity in the body of believers was critical to establishing the early church.

Christ wants us to be known for our love, and He claimed that our unity would cause others to believe in Him. Love is characterized by their sacrificial care and devotion to the holy flourishing of one another. The NT church's standard is a bond that surpasses our natural families and is only possible because of our joint fellowship with Jesus. The goal is not merely to get along despite our different backgrounds but to love each other as Christ loved us. We are called to be united to the extent that the Father is one with the Son.

In conclusion, God's mission is the purpose of the church; as stated above, "The mission was not created for the church, rather the church was established for the mission." The mission is given clearly after the resurrection through Jesus' great commissioning. As stated before, the purpose



of everyone who bears the name Christian is to proclaim the message they received to those far from God. The Lord Jesus invites His disciples to carry out the mission through our declaration of the good news. We are Christ ambassadors in the foreign land of Wichita Falls sent to herald the message of good news from God. The good news declares that the King of kings is making for Himself a new people that He alone knows and keeps for His great glory.

Let us resolve never to be content with laboring in an unfruitful way in the mission of God. May our devotion to Jesus our Lord make it hard to go to hell in Wichita Falls. The gospel demands us to steward the message with urgency! Jesus is worth it! Jesus reminds us, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). We have been given a great gift in the gospel, and we have extraordinary stewardship to share that message of good news with everyone. Paul expresses it well in 2 Corinthians 5:14: "for the love of Christ controls us." We believe that the gospel is gifted to us by the Holy Spirit for participation in His glorious mission.

-Pastor Cody



Covenant Membership

Purpose

Anyone who comes into a relationship with God by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ enters into two covenants. The first is to abide with Jesus for the rest of their life and love Him. The second is to partner with His fellow children in the local church community. Through faith, we are committed to Jesus and the rest of the worldwide church (all truly converted Christians in the world). To symbolize our oneness with Christ and all Christians, we ask you to make a specific commitment to a group of Christians in Wichita Falls with whom we will practice our faith missionally and through faithful covenant with one another. Partnership in a church is a formal acknowledgment of this, and the Redeemer Partnership Covenant serves the following purposes:

- To join the Spirit in establishing an authentic Jesus loving community living out the great commission together.
- To faithfully shepherd the local household of God toward Christ as Lord.
- To promote consistency, accountability, and loving unity among the church family.
- To fulfill God's call for the Redeemer Church to be a Gospel Centered Disciple Making Family.

This covenant does not indicate that you will never fall short but that your heart desires to fulfill our calling to the best of your abilities. We hope this covenant will be a personal gift to your Christian journey and a blessing to the people around you.



Redeemer's Shepherding Covenant

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church leadership covenants the following:

- 1) We covenant to provide loving care for you and seek your growth in Christ (Hebrews 13:17; I Thessalonians 5:12).
- 2) We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the Scriptures (Galatians 6:6; I Timothy 5:17–18).
- 3) We covenant that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27–28).
- 4) We covenant to help you in times of need (Acts 2:42–47, 4:32–35; James 2:14–17).
- 5) We covenant that the Redeemer elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1–13; 5:17–22; Titus 1:5–9; I Peter 5:1–4).
- 6) We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
- 7) We covenant to guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28–31).
- 8) We covenant to exercise church discipline/bold instruction when necessary (Matthew 18:15–20; I Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1).
- 9) We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Ephesians 4:11–13).
- 10) We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1–5).
- 11) We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of a faithful coven (I Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; I Timothy 4:12).
- 12) We covenant to be good stewards and managers of the resources of this church (Acts 11:29–30; II Thessalonians 3:10–12).



Redeemer Member's Covenant

With the guiding help of the Holy Spirit, I, the undersigned, publicly proclaim the following:

1) I am a Christian who has been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ through faith. I have accepted His gift of salvation, bought by His death on the cross, as He endured the punishment for my sins and His resurrection through which I am gifted eternal life (John 3:16–18; Romans 3:23–26). In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized.

2) As an individual (and family unit, if applicable), I will seek to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus. This will be accomplished by studying the Scripture, prayer, other habits of grace, and family worship (Psalm 119:97, Ephesians 6:4). As I walk with the Lord, I will strive to grow in holiness and reflect Christ-likeness in all areas of my life, my character, and my actions.

3) I will faithfully commit myself to Redeemer corporate gatherings and my Gospel Community or its equivalent (Psalm 105:1–2; Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:23–25, Ephesians 5:19-21).

4) I will give resources cheerfully, voluntarily, and generously to Redeemer as we seek to expand the kingdom of God together (2 Corinthians 8–9, James 2:14-17).

5) I will share my life and faith with those around me and participate in God's missional purposes (Matthew 9:37-38, Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 10:11-15, Philemon 6).

6) I will volunteer my time to help Redeemer live out the vision as a Gospel-Centered, Disciple-Making, Family (Ephesians 5:21, Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:5-7).

7) I will follow the biblical procedures of church discipline regarding my brothers and sisters in Christ and submit myself to church discipline if the need should ever arise (Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 2:5–8).

8) I have read the Redeemer doctrinal statement, and I understand that these doctrinal positions will be taught to Redeemer Church (Galatians 1 & 2 Timothy 4:1-3).

9) I commit not to be divisive on any doctrinal statements or other secondary issues but to seek unity in the body purposefully (Titus 3:10, Romans 16:17-18, 1 Timothy 6:3-5, & Ephesians 4:3).

10) I understand the importance of showing honor to church leadership, and I will be diligent in preserving unity and peace and preventing gossip and relational discord (1 Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 4:1–3; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

I commit my life, abilities, and resources to partner and serve the mission of Redeemer Church. I will reconsider my commitment to this Partnership Covenant yearly via the re-covenant process. I understand my responsibility will be to notify the church leadership if at any time, I can no longer commit to this covenant or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Redeemer Church.



Redeemer Church

Beliefs Summary

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is the only essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are encouraged to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16, Romans 15:4, Romans 10:17, Matthew 24:35, Isaiah 55:11, Joshua 1:8, Psalm 119:105, Hebrews 4:12-14, Psalm 19:7-11

2. GOD IS TRIUNE

There is one God: infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love. In the unity of the godhead there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-existent, coequal, co-eternal. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit, yet each is truly Deity. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life.

Matthew 28:19, Isaiah 48:16, 1 Corinthians 8:6, John 14:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, John 15:26, Matthew 3:16-17, John 1:1, Genesis 1:26



3. GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world from nothing. Through the same Word He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and in His unfathomable grace gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 4:6, Matthew 23:9, Psalm 68:5, Isaiah 64:8, Malachi 2:10, Psalm 103:13, Ephesians 1:3, James 1:17, John 14:9-11, Isaiah 63:16, 1 Peter 1:3, 1 John 3:1

4. JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in Him all things hold together by the word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and for a period of 40 days appeared to more than 500 witnesses, performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

John 3:16, Hebrews 1:3, John 1:3, Acts 2:38, John 20:31, Colossians 1:15, John 4:24, John 1:14, Luke 1:35, Isaiah 9:6

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the Gospel He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate.



The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son, who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored, and worshiped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

John 14:26, John 4:24, Romans 8:9, Romans 8:14, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:26, Acts 2:38, John 15:26, John 14:17, Ephesians 4:30, Galatians 5:22-23

6. MAN

God made man—male and female—in His own image, as the crown of creation, that man might have fellowship with him. Tempted by Satan, man rebelled against God. Being estranged from His Maker, yet responsible to him, he became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical and pervasive. It extends to his mind, will, and affections. Unregenerate man lives under the dominion of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God, hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful people, whatever their character or attainments, are lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ.

Genesis 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, Matthew 6:33, John 8:34, 2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 3:23, John 3:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 8:1, Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 8:4

7. THE GOSPEL

Jesus Christ is the Gospel. The good news is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the Gospel, His resurrection is the power of the Gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the Gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Galatians 3:8-9, Mark 1:14-15, Revelation 14:6-7, Romans 1:16-17, John 3:16, Isaiah 55:6-7, Isaiah 53:4-5, Titus 2:11-14, Acts 2:38, Romans 1:16, 1 Timothy 2:5-6



8. MAN'S RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

The message of the Gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and, by God's grace, put saving faith in Christ. This Gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up His cross, and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple.

John 6:44, John 6:37, Acts 16:14, Ephesians 2:8, Romans 8:29-30, Acts 13:48, 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Peter 3:9, Titus 2:11

9. MAN'S INHERITANCE THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Salvation, the free gift of God, is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ and His substitutionary death receives the gift of eternal life and is declared righteous by God as a free gift. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. He is justified and fully accepted by God. Through Christ's atonement for sin an individual is reconciled to God as Father and becomes His child. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and, via the miracle of regeneration, liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9, 1 Corinthians 1:30, Romans 4:5, Romans 1:17, Romans 4:6, Jeremiah 23:6, Genesis 15:6

10. SANCTIFICATION

The Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce His fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality, as we are led by the Spirit we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word, and deed. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people until the end, which is most certain.



2 Timothy 2:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, John 17:17, Galatians 2:20, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Romans 6:6, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 13:12, Philippians 1:6, Romans 6:1-23, 2 Peter 1:2-4, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Peter 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

11. THE CHURCH

God by His Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination. Rather, the Church universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the Gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on the earth. This involves a commitment to see the Gospel preached and churches planted in all the world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the Gospel. When God transforms human nature, this then becomes the chief means of society's transformation. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

All members of the Church universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God, and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the church (including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. Through the gift ministries, all members of the Church are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry.

Matthew 16:18, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 10:24-25, Colossians 3:16, Acts 2:42-47, Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Corinthians 3:17, Matthew 18:20, Romans 16:17, Romans 12:4-5

12. SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Water baptism is intended only for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin.



As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf, and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith and self examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

1 Corinthians 11:26, Acts 2:42, Acts 2:38, Matthew 28:19, Acts 16:33, Galatians 3:27

13. THE CONSUMMATION

The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever. Married to Christ as His Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Revelation 21:4, 1 Corinthians 15:26, Psalm 23:6



Elder Statements

The Elder statements do not have to be believed by Redeemer members, but they will be taught. Therefore, we ask members to refrain from stirring up division about these statements, instead in line with our desire to be a gospel centered family to quickly seek clarity when unsure of certain teachings in the bible that are complex in their biblical interpretation.

The Holy Spirit

Redeemer's elders affirm the ongoing use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs at conversion for all Christians.

1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12

A good book: Are the Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views edited by Gundry and Grudem.

Man's Response to the Gospel

Redeemer's elders affirm that man's response to the Gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own glory. We believe God predestines all believers to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

Romans 8, Ephesians 1, John 6 & 15, 2 Timothy 1, Titus 3, Acts 13

A good book: Putting Amazing Back Into Grace by Michael Horton

Sanctification

Redeemer's elders affirm that growth is progressive. Faith and the resultant obedience to God will have an ebb and flow, but God will slowly move us forward in conformity to Jesus. We deny that it is possible for someone to be a genuine follower of Christ and fail to continue to believe and bear some measure of fruit.

2 Timothy 2, 1 Thessalonians 5, John 17, Galatians 2, 2 Thessalonians 2, 2 Corinthians 5, 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 6, Hebrews 10, Hebrews 13, Philippians 1, Romans 6

A good book: The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance & Assurance by Thomas Schreiner



Baptism

The Meaning of Baptism

The elders of Redeemer affirm that the practice of baptism is an act of obedience. Baptism is not an act that secures salvation for the Christian, but it is an act of obedience that is practiced in the New Testament church and is considered a sacrament of the Christian church. Those who desire to be covenant members with Redeemer do affirm that they were baptized professing faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The Mode of Baptism

The elders also affirm that the mode of baptism that is most consistent with the Scriptures is water baptism by immersion for the Christian. We affirmed, “In obedience to Christ’s command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” This will be the practice of Redeemer.

Baptism of Children

Baptism of children of Christian families is a complex issue that has a variety of practices in the church including

- Baptizing infants
- Baptizing very young children as they profess faith (usually 4-5 year olds is common in many churches)
- Delaying baptism until children are older

We favor the 3rd option of delaying baptism even for children that appear to believe in Jesus so that their baptism will be helpful to them as adults. Our guideline at Redeemer is 12 years old. Some children younger than this may be mature enough in terms of grasping the gospel and having a relationship with Jesus that they are ready to be baptized. In this case, our standard is that any baptism candidate will need to be able to adequately participate in a baptism interview.

If in the judgment of the parents and Redeemer pastors, the child is ready for baptism, then we will go forward with the baptism just like we would for an adult. If prospective members who have baptized their children as infants want them to become Redeemer members, we ask that they wait until they are at least 12 years of age and go through the membership process. We want to partner with parents in the overall discipleship of their children to cherish Jesus as Lord as



independent disciples actively, not passively obeying the commands of Jesus due to family adopted faith.

The Institution of Marriage

The elders of Redeemer affirm that the word of God is our final authority on issues of sexuality, marriage, love and all other aspects of life. Therefore, we affirm and maintain that God's good and perfect design for marriage is clearly defined for us in the Bible. It is our biblical conviction that God designed marriage to be a committed, covenantal relationship between one man and one woman. In the context of this covenantal union, a husband and wife are able to enjoy spiritual intimacy, emotional intimacy, and physical intimacy. Here are a few of the Scriptures that clearly define the marriage relationship that God has intended.

- Genesis 2:18-25
- Proverbs 18:22
- Matthew 19:4-6
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-4
- Ephesians 5:22-33

We believe that God has ordained the institution of marriage for our human flourishing and his ultimate glory. This mandate cannot be revised or redefined by court systems, human institutions or cultural shifts. The God of the Scriptures is perfect in wisdom and he created the one-flesh union between a husband and wife knowing it would reflect His wisdom fully and completely.

Although we maintain this biblical view of marriage, we do want to acknowledge that same-sex attraction and same-sex desires are present feelings for some people who love Jesus. This is due to the Fall that has worked its way into every aspect of our humanity. For those who struggle to honor God and not act on those desires, we want to say that the grace of Jesus is sufficient. The gospel centered community offered here at Redeemer is a powerful ally in the fight against loneliness and unmet desires. You can trust our Lord to be patient and merciful as you walk with other believers in humility remembering that the life you now live is through life transformational faith in Jesus, allowing us to repent of our sins and walk in His ways (Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).



The Role of Women at Redeemer Church

Introduction

The Bible teaches that God created two complementary sexes of humans, male and female, to bear His image together (Gen. 1:27-28; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). This distinction in gender represents an essential characteristic of personhood and reflects an essential part of being created in God's image.

As outlined in Scripture and in accordance with our Beliefs Summary, we believe that men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity and value and are complementary by divine design. Gender does not merely represent a social construct but, instead, represents a reality present in every human from birth. Men and women are not interchangeable.

From the opening pages of Scripture, we find that God, in His wisdom and providence, created two complementary sexes for our good and His glory. In light of His good created order, and the fact that men and women both share in divine image bearing, God intends for men and women to have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the church and home. These role distinctions do not arise from cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity but are an integral part of God's plan for humanity, as revealed in Scripture. We should recognize them as God's grace to men and women, protecting, preserving and practicing them for His glory, our joy and for the sake of human flourishing (Gen. 2:18-25; 1 Cor. 11:2-16, 14:33-35; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

To reflect God's beautiful design as Redeemer Church, we desire to articulate and embody a theological vision of complementarianism. Specifically, when it comes to the consideration of women in ministry, we want to be obedient to Scripture, honor the Lord and give opportunities for women to flourish in their role(s) at Redeemer Church. This paper seeks to describe that vision by explaining what we believe Scripture teaches about gender complementarity as it relates to women in ministry at Redeemer Church.

Role of Women in Scripture

Our foundation for life and ministry starts with the understanding that the Bible is God's inspired and authoritative Word. As affirmed in our Statement of Basic Beliefs, "We believe the Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient" (Ps. 19:7-11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Any attempt to understand personhood and gender must begin with divine revelation and God's created order.

First, we believe that all Christians are charged with the Great Commission. All Christians, both men and women, participate in the ministry of the church. We believe the Bible explicitly encourages and assumes that women will be involved in the ministry of the church. Jesus welcomed women among His disciples, teaching them (Luke 10:39) and involving them in His ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Paul's words to Titus teach that older women teaching biblical wisdom to younger women is a noble, beautiful and necessary task (Titus 2:3-5). Phoebe, a patron and



deacon of the church of Cenchreae, is commended by Paul and was likely the courier for Paul's epistle to the Romans, indicating her participation in gospel ministry (Rom. 16:1-2). Euodia and Syntyche labored with Paul "side-by-side" in the gospel (Phil. 4:3). Priscilla is described as "explaining the way of God more accurately" to Apollos (Acts 18:26). We celebrate the biblical picture of men and women serving the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ together. We rejoice in biblical examples of men and women using their gifts in the Church for the glory of God.

The Bible depicts a vision of men and women laboring alongside one another in the world and the Church for the sake of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 12:4-31). When we don't empower both sexes to engage and use their gifts, in complementarian partnership, both genders suffer, and the mission of the Church—to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of all nations—suffers.

Second, in light of the belief that male and female image bearers flourish in partnership, we expect that the primary relationship between Christian men and women is that of brotherly and sisterly love. We note that the Bible upholds the metaphor of siblinghood as the primary descriptor for male-female partnering in the Church. The concept that is taught in the New Testament is that the Church ought to have the kind of love for one another that is reserved for blood brothers and sisters. This uniquely Christian disposition reminds us that we ought to see each other as a family in a special sense. Therefore, the primary relationship in the local church between men and women is the relationship of brothers and sisters, united in Christ, not subordinates. We affirm that cultivating an environment of brotherly and sisterly love is at the heart of complementarianism. These relationships should be marked by honor, care and sacrifice for one another.

Third, we affirm that equal involvement in the church between men and women does not entail interchangeable involvement. Although men and women are portrayed as equals throughout Scripture, we believe the Bible reserves the office of elder/pastor specifically for qualified men. Scripture calls elders to lead the church (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2), preach the Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9), protect the church from false teaching (Acts 20:17, 28-31; Titus 1:9) pray for and visit the sick (Jas. 5:14; Acts 20:35), equip the saints for ministry (Eph. 4:11-12) and use proper judgment in theological and doctrinal matters (Acts 15). In shepherding, overseeing, leading, caring for and praying for the local church, elders practice sacrificial male headship. Therefore, although we encourage all men and women to actively participate in the life of the church, we reserve the office of elder, and the responsibilities unique to it, for certain qualified men within the church. Apart from the role of pastor/elder, we believe the Bible explicitly encourages and assumes that women will be involved in the ministry of the church.

Affirmations and Denials

Based on the conclusions drawn from Scripture, we have created a list of affirmations and denials that encompass our beliefs on gender and the role of women in ministry.

We affirm that both men and women have been created in the image of God and are



entitled to the privileges and held accountable to the responsibilities that come with reflecting our Creator.

We deny that either gender has been given or is entitled to greater dignity in society, the home, the church or the kingdom of God.

We affirm that both men and women are needed and necessary for the health and ministry of the church. Godly men and women should be visible partners in the corporate life of the church, deploying their diverse gifts for the good of the body. Simply put, all Christians contribute to the ministry of the church.

We deny that the church can flourish without brotherly/ sisterly partnership. We deny that a church can exist in which the men flourish and the women do not, or vice versa.

We affirm that the role/function of elders is reserved for qualified men. Elders are distinctly responsible for overseeing the church (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-2) and preaching the Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9).

We deny that the role of elders being withheld from women diminishes their importance or their influence in the church. The indispensable help women were created to give can and should be exercised in all manner of roles/offices in the church, excepting those reserved for qualified men.

We affirm that all members of the church should be in glad submission to the elder body, and that all should be in glad and sacrificial submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

We deny that all women are subject to the leadership and authority of all men. Further, biblical submission is not indicative of subordination or inequality, as seen in the Son's submission to the Father (Phil. 2:1-11).

We affirm that complementarianism, rightly practiced, will lead to the recognizable flourishing of both sexes.

We deny any version of complementarianism or theological position that leads to the subjugation, abuse or neglect of any man or woman. We strongly denounce any distorted view of Scripture that contributes to the belief that biblical manhood or womanhood includes or permits practices such as marginalization, subjugation, intimidation, neglect or any form of abuse.

We affirm that all men and women have been created in the image of God, whether single or married.



We deny that single men and women must be married to be meaningful participants in the corporate life of the church. We deny that single men possess any authority over single women. The way that they love and serve their sisters should not patronize, victimize or show force, but rather should be the fruit of brotherly love, and vice versa¹.

¹ Adapted from the Village Institute.

