

Grace Assembly is a community of people which began meeting

together in the spring of 2002. As a fellowship, we understand and are committed to living together as *God's people, in God's place, under God's rule* - which is just to say, entering and living as followers in the Kingdom of heaven over which Jesus Christ is Lord and King.

In a culture like ours where "Christianity" is so familiar a term and where churches are in such abundance and variety, it becomes all the more important to think clearly and biblically about the meaning of such terms as *Christian* and *church*. Rather than assume that everyone has a common understanding of what church *is* and *does*, it has become necessary these days to sketch in some detail the portrait of a fellowship so that one will then be in a better position to make a genuine commitment to it. So we offer this booklet with the hope that it will provide just that - an accurate, helpful portrait of the fellowship called *Grace Assembly*. These commitments and perspectives have grown out of extended study and as the result of many thoughtful questions and ensuing discussions. Here are some of the questions and answers which significantly shape our individual and common life together.

I. For starters, what is biblical fellowship?

Fellowship, as a biblical term, means "to share in something, to jointly participate in something, or to be in a partnership." It speaks of relationship, union and communion - first and foremost with YAHWEH, whom the Bible reveals as the Creator of heaven and earth and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ - and then secondly, with the community of those who have been redeemed through the grace of the gospel.

Fellowship with the Father and one another is based on our common understanding of, and wholehearted trust in, the good news that Jesus Christ was sent into this world by the Father to establish His Father's Kingdom and to deliver fallen men like us from the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous Kingdom of light. He has accomplished this by

offering His Son as a sinless, all-satisfying, substitutionary sacrifice - accepted by the Father on behalf of all who repent of their sin and receive by faith the forgiveness purchased by Jesus Christ through his death on the cross. He hung in our place, took our death sentence, suffered the agony due us and satisfied the deserved wrath of God against our lawless rejection of His rule. Now Jesus has risen from the dead, promised us life and freedom just like His, and has gone back to His Father's place to assume the throne of His kingdom from which He now reigns as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is also preparing for His children and awaiting the moment of His triumphant return and the restoration of all things. And so we seek to take our stand in the same ancient stream of fellowship spoken of by the Apostle John in his letter to the first Christians:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched— this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” ²

Such fellowship we take to be utterly, immeasurably superior to every other relationship and pursuit in life, and therefore must be - in duty *and* delight – the primary and functional commitment of our individual and communal lives. Fellowship in this sense conditions everything else we are and do as His church. We were *made* to live this way with God and man, loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. These are the two great commandments which sum up *all* the others. What we are about as a church has to grow from, and be guided by, these summary priorities of YAHWEH's kingdom.

II. So, what's Church supposed to be all about?

A bewildering number of answers to this question swirl around us today, often resulting in confusion and not a little division. Such a state of affairs is neither necessary nor beneficial. In the beginning, the original creation was (and is) all about God's Kingship and glory, wisdom and power, and so it is in God's *new* creation, the church: "...to Him be *glory in the church* by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." In stark contrast to the ever popular perspective that seeks to make the wisdom and desire of *man* the measures of what the church should be and do, the Bible repeatedly and pointedly declares that we exist as the people of God in order *to show the unsurpassed value, beauty and wisdom of God in His determination to deliver and transform fallen men into His own people who willingly, joyfully and thankfully live as children in His household, subjects in His Kingdom, priests in His temple and prophets in His world.* To make a long story short(er), this is primarily done by making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things that Jesus has commanded His disciples to observe. In keeping with what was stated above, a *disciple* of Jesus Christ is someone who is in genuine fellowship with the Father through the Son, and in fellowship with other disciples of Jesus Christ in the body of Christ - that is, His church. There is a lifetime of learning and obeying in this regard, which is why the commitments of genuine fellowship are so crucial. To fulfill such a high calling demands that disciples actually be in communion with one another as the context in which this unsurpassed value, beauty and wisdom of God is displayed, as Paul makes explicit in Ephesians 3:8-12. Paul calls this truth God's *eternal purpose* for the church, so we must not - we cannot - fail in this one pursuit through preoccupation with seemingly endless lesser pursuits.

III. How does a 21st century Church remain faithful to God's eternal purpose?

This question is the relevant for all church ages. The source and answer is exclusively found in the *Scriptures*. Thus, it is possible to find succinct instructions to the church explaining how to keep this focus true. Paul's letter to Titus and the Cretan church is perhaps as fine a primer on the blueprint of His eternal purpose as can be found anywhere in Scripture. Coupled with the letter to the Ephesians, we are left with little doubt about staying true to our calling as a church - regardless of time or place, culture or circumstance.

Briefly stated, Paul's letter to Titus details **three** fundamental commitments of a faithful church:

- the Church must be led by a group of spiritually mature and gifted men according to the instructions laid down in Titus chapter 1;
- the Church must listen to, embrace and encourage sound teaching in its common life together as laid down in chapter 2;
- • the Church must live conscientiously before the world with humility, integrity and readiness to maintain good works as laid down in chapter 3.

Furthermore, in Paul's letter to the Ephesian church (ch. 4), we learn the specific *ways* by which God intends to bring about His glory in the church:

- God gives not only **saving** grace to all who repent and believe the gospel, but all necessary **sanctifying and serving** grace as well (vs. 7);
- the health and ministry of the church is the concern and responsibility of every believer, not a separate class of "professionals" (vs. 12);
- God gives evangelists, pastors and teachers to the church in order to equip His household for ministry and to edify His body,

primarily through the ministry of the Word, prayer and by example (vs. 11, see also Acts 6) the purpose of all this is that the church would become:

- unified in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God (vs 13);
- mature in Christ and *like* Christ (vs. 13-14);
- able and willing to speak the truth in love (vs. 15);
- a functioning, effective, fruitful and edifying body (vs. 16);

When *any* church pursues and nurtures these Kingdom-of-heaven priorities, then it can be confident that it is living in concert with God's purposes, and with God's favor. No matter how insistently the world "tugs" on the church's skirts in an effort to garner her attention, her resources, her admiration, her envy, her submission, or whatever - we must keep our attention resolutely fixed upon our Bridegroom and first of all seek to please, honor and obey Him.

IV. Priorities and Distinctives of Grace Assembly

Several important aspects of Grace Assembly's life and ministry are directly affected by a sure-footed pursuit of faithfulness to the purposes previously noted:

• **WORSHIP:** Since Christian worship has YAHWEH as its sole object, His character, work, pleasure and approval must be uppermost in the minds and hearts of those who truly worship *Him* in spirit and in truth. New Covenant worship - in contrast to the former Covenant - is decidedly not confined, nor defined, by geography, architecture or ceremonial observances. None of these things are of necessity wrong; they are just no longer *of necessity*. Old Testament concepts such as special land, temple, priest, animal sacrifice, incense, washings, etc., have all been fulfilled in, and transformed by, Jesus Christ. New Covenant believers worship in "spirit and truth" because the Spirit has taken the truth and written it upon the heart and put it in the mind. In Jesus Christ, *we* have *become* a priesthood, a living temple filled with the incense of the saint's prayers, sprinkled with the precious blood of Christ, continually offering "to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess His name."³ Such worship and communion is a distinct and unique feature of the New Covenant.

Such a perspective does not occur naturally nor automatically to *fallen* men, especially in the self-absorbed, humanistic, pragmatic, make-me-feel-good culture that surrounds the church today. A conscious, biblically informed and sustained effort must ever be raised against the unrelenting forces of worldliness which seek to conform the church to its own image. When popular appetites such as love of entertainment and showmanship, pop psychology, social/political activism, materialism etc., are catered to, God-centered worship is easily side-stepped in favor of a man-centered, needs-oriented “worship experience.” God-directed worship, on the other hand, happens as the Holy Spirit enables the Saints to see, love, adore, praise, honor and magnify God in the revelation which He gives of Himself *in His Word*.

And so we read the Scriptures together, we sing of the beauties of the Lord and His amazing ways, we pray together and we give serious, sustained attention to hearing His word that we may learn to “observe all that He has commanded us.” Because worship that YAHWEH seeks is defined by “spirit *and* truth,” we believe worship is a *whole person experience*. If emotional expression (and worse, manipulation) becomes the highlight or goal of worship, empty-headed sentimentalism can easily displace worship. If academic theological instruction becomes the overriding objective, heartless orthodoxy may subtly displace worship. In either case, a form of idolatry is encouraged, for neither empty-headed sentimentality nor heartless orthodoxy reflect well the beauty, depth and richness of God’s glory, which He *intends* to be displayed “in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”⁴ Heart and soul, mind and body must be brought to adoration through His word and His Spirit, for in the Word “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” of God.⁵ So the Word must be exposed to us, and us to the Word, whether in expositional reading, preaching, singing or praying - thus we learn of God and thus we grow in adoration and praise of God. Contemporary disputes and divisions over worship style and musical taste reveal how badly the church has lost its focus upon God and has rather fallen into the snare of “man-pleasing.” To fall to fighting over *style* is to have lost the fight before it begins. There is much to *commend* in today’s song and music, and there is

not a little that is *non-commendable*. Always and only the concern must be, not what pleases any of us in worship, but what pleases God! This requires discernment, skill, maturity, understanding and humility. Issues pertaining to God-pleasing worship are not to be left to egalitarian, relativistic impulses which drive many of our current cultural appetites, and unfortunately, increasingly more of our worship expectations. We are instructed by the apostle Paul to “[find] out what is acceptable to the Lord”...and to “understand what the will of the Lord is.”⁶ Of all things, this certainly includes our worship. These truths (and many others) - nurtured and protected in our midst - will help us maintain a sound, God-pleasing pursuit and practice of worship.

• **LEADERSHIP:** GA is shepherded and taught by a group of men called elders (the terms *elder*, *overseer* and *shepherd* are used interchangeably in Scripture to explain the differing aspects of spiritual leadership, but the three terms all refer to the same “office” of leadership).⁷ Since the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of *His* church, the entire fellowship is both obligated and joyfully willing to hear and follow its Head. Elders are spiritually mature men lovingly given by the Head to His Body, recognized and appointed by the fellowship. In their living and teaching, the elders are to embrace the kind of unity, love, discernment and obedience to which the whole fellowship is called. The elders lead and oversee according to scriptural proposition and principle in the unity, discernment and wisdom given by the Holy Spirit. Deacons minister in the household of Christ as mature believers whose main task is to serve the body in practical need-meeting and care. The combined ministry of elders and deacons, together with the entire fellowship’s common stewardship of the manifold grace of God in either speaking to or serving one another,⁸ all makes for health and joy in the fellowship. But we *must* remember - only one “man” ultimately runs the church - The Man Christ Jesus.

• **COMMUNITY:** Although dividing into sub-groups can be beneficial for specialized goals (e.g. age-appropriate instruction), the Lord places a high priority on the *community* of believers. Social and cultural

emphases on peer identity, peer approval and peer exclusivity have increasingly worked *against* the biblical mandate for young and old, immature and mature, male and female, “Jew and Greek” to submit to one another in the fear of God for the purposes noted in Ephesians 4:7-15. We have therefore deliberately worked to keep the fellowship together, and to resist such things as unhealthy age segregation, which often deprives the body of shared wisdom, relational maturity and unity.

• **FELLOWSHIP:** The pursuit of New Testament discipleship and fellowship is uncomplicated. We are rooted and built up in Jesus Christ as we learn to hear and walk in His word *together*. Simple obedience to New Covenant “one-another” commands such as:

- > *love* one another
- > *pray for* one another
- > *serve* one another
- > *admonish* one another
- > *exhort* one another
- > *be devoted to* one another in brotherly love
- > *accept* one another, just as Christ accepted us
- > *give preference to* one another
- > *be of the same mind with* one another
- > *be subject to* one another
- > *bear* one another’s burdens
- > *show forbearance to* one another
- > *greet* one another

fulfill the law of Christ to “love your neighbor as yourself.” These commands, born of the fruit of the Spirit, are to be the form and substance of our shared lives together. Often our calendars can become filled with lots of “Christian” activities and programs which, more often than not, serve to *distract us* from actually fulfilling these commands rather than enable us. We should work hard to stimulate one another to love and good works, all the while keeping Paul’s words close at hand:

“...aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands...that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”⁹

• **EVANGELISM:** Faithfulness to New Testament evangelism is to call all the nations to discipleship in the Kingdom of heaven through the gospel of the Kingdom, which Jesus came to establish. The gospel is a call to enter that Kingdom through repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. God has chosen the “foolishness of preaching” to save His people,¹⁰ and so true evangelism repudiates manipulation, gimmicks and deceit, while confidently relying on the power of God’s Word as it portrays the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for sinners. All who turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in repentance and faith are “delivered...from the power of darkness and conveyed...into the kingdom of the Son of His love...”¹¹

In His wisdom, God has given some in the body as gifted evangelists who are exceptionally motivated, able and fruitful in the ministry of sowing the gospel, while the whole body faithfully aids, encourages and promotes the sowing of the gospel in many different ways and through various good works. Making disciples (baptized *followers* of Jesus Christ) is the ultimate goal of all true evangelism.¹²

• **GIVING:** Stewardship is an important aspect of discipleship in the kingdom of heaven. As a fellowship, we strive to be faithful to the priorities and principles which are revealed in the Scriptures. Congregational giving has relatively few priorities according to the Scriptures: benevolence and care, both within the fellowship and without; pioneering the advance of the kingdom among those unreached with the gospel and strengthening the existing church; and care of the leadership. All other budgetary pursuits are secondary and must not be allowed to crowd out first priorities. Our giving is structured to reflect these three basic commitments. With God’s help, we will not become entangled with programs, buildings or any other kinds of indebtedness which will prevent us from pursuing and maintaining these priorities in the life of our fellowship.

• **MEMBERSHIP:** Scripture teaches that all who are in Christ Jesus are one body and “individually members of one another.”¹³ There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in [us] all.¹⁴ *All* Christians are members in the New Covenant through and with their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and are, therefore, in covenant with one another and share equally in the covenant blessings and responsibilities of the one body. This is how the Bible views “membership.” It remains only for Christians to find a local fellowship in which they may embrace these responsibilities and grow in the blessings of His kingdom.

We have a *formal* process by which one becomes a “member” at Grace Assembly, if after sufficient time with this body in worship, study, prayer and fellowship, you believe that this is where God is leading you to fulfill – and enjoy - your New Covenant responsibilities together “with the saints and members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19) , then it remains only to begin (or continue) earnestly submitting to and participating in the mutual ministry of this body as we “learn to observe all things that [He] has commanded us...”

Foundational to this submission is repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ¹⁵; baptism in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit¹⁶; and continued fellowship at the table of the Lord with His people.¹⁷ Growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”¹⁸ guides our ongoing pursuit of His kingdom together. Inherent in the nature and calling of a disciple is *discipline*, which is a good and necessary component of learning “to observe all things that [He] has commanded us...” and growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” All men are sinners, and coming to Christ does not *automatically* nor *finally* negate the power of the “law of sin and death” which yet remains in force, even in the lives of God’s redeemed. As members of God’s household, we are called to the ongoing disciplines of godliness - personally, relationally and corporately as His body. These all work to conform us to the image of Christ and to make of us a beautiful bride for His honor and glory.

When personal and relational discipline becomes ineffective and unfruitful in the life of a disciple, it sometimes becomes necessary for the fellowship *as a whole* to exercise a form of discipline which may lead to public expulsion from the fellowship. Scripture supplies ample instruction to guide the body in this process (e.g. Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6-11), and to define the goals of such discipline (e.g. Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 12:10-11).

A Final Word

Hopefully this booklet has provided a helpful portrait of Grace Assembly and some of the priorities held by the fellowship here. Of course, there are a good many other topics of great importance which could (and perhaps should) have been mentioned. Mark Dever's *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, Don Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church* and Wayne Mack's *Life in the Father's House* are fine examples of lengthier treatments of similar topics. It should go without saying (but we'll say it anyway) that we know we hold to these priorities imperfectly, and so the need for ongoing transformation, renewal and reform remains essential and desirable to us as a fellowship. We want these priorities not only to be *descriptive* of who we are, but also continually *formative* in our living together as *God's people, in God's place, under God's rule* - the kingdom of heaven among us...Soli Deo Gloria.

ENDNOTES

¹ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom* (Paternoster Press, 1981), p. 46.

² I John 1:1-3

³ I Peter 2:4-5,9; I Peter 1:19; Hebrews 10:22; 13:15

⁴ Ephesians 3:21

⁵ Colossians 2:3

⁶ Ephesians 5:10, 17

⁷ Acts 20:17-28; I Timothy 3:1ff; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-2, noting the interchangeable use of these three terms.

⁸ I Peter 4:10-11

⁹ I Thessalonians 4:11-12

- ¹⁰ I Corinthians 1:18-21
 - ¹¹ Colossians 1:13
 - ¹² Matthew 28:18-20
 - ¹³ Romans 12:5
 - ¹⁴ Ephesians 4:4-6
 - ¹⁵ Acts 20:21
 - ¹⁶ Matthew 28:19
 - ¹⁷ Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 10:16; 11:17-34
 - ¹⁸ II Peter 3:18
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Grace Assembly Statement of Faith

The church of the living God is “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), therefore it is the responsibility of every member of the church to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (Jd 3)

We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. (1 Cor 13:12, 2 Peter 3:18) Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and pray that the reader, whether in agreement or disagreement, will emulate the “fair-minded” people of Berea who “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

1. The Holy Scripture

God has revealed all that is necessary for life and salvation in the sixty-six books of the Bible, which is the Word of God (1). All Scripture is inerrant and infallible, transmitted through human authors by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2). Scripture alone is the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. Its authority is derived from its Author and not from the opinions of men (3).

2. God and the Trinity

There is one true and living God (1) who exists in three eternally distinct persons (2): the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (3). These three are one in essence (4), united in purpose (5), and equally worthy of honor (6). God is invisible, eternal, omni-present, almighty, all-knowing,

unchanging, dependent upon none, sovereign, righteous, holy, just, gracious, loving, merciful, patient, and good (7).

3. Creation

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 This work of creation was completed in six days followed by a day of rest, and all that was created was declared to be very good by its Creator. The created order was effectively constructed by the omnipotent word of God, “so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” Hebrews 11:3 (1). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit acted together in the work of creation (2). Out of all living things, only man was created in God’s image. God granted him dominion over all lesser forms of life and over the earth itself (3).

4. Sovereign Providence

God orders and directs His universe in every detail (1). Every event in nature and every human action and decision is according to His decree and purpose (2). In God’s infinite wisdom and power, all things work together for the benefit of His people (3), and for His glory (4).

5. The Fall and Its Effects

God made Adam perfect, holy, and upright (1), appointing him representative and head of the human race (2). He fell from his original righteousness into sin when he disobeyed God’s command (3). By his sinful act, Adam brought all people into a state of death and condemnation, passing to each one of them a corrupt sinful nature (4).

6. Man’s Inability

The Fall brought every man into a state of utter depravity, meaning all aspects of his being are distorted by sin (1). Apart from the grace of God, fallen man treats sin as his master (2), God as an enemy (3), and the message of the cross as foolishness (4). Until he is born again, he possesses neither the desire nor the ability to love God, to keep His laws, to understand the gospel, to repent of sin, or to trust in Christ (5).

7. The Birth and Life of Christ

God sent His Son into the world to save His people from their sins (1). Conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (2), He was and is both God and man (3). He was tempted in every way yet without sin (4), living the perfect life of righteousness on behalf of His people (5).

8. The Death of Christ

Christ died on the cross (1) as the perfect sacrifice for sin (2), forever finishing the substitutionary work of atonement (3) for His people, the church (4).

9. The Resurrection of Christ

On the third day, Christ rose bodily from the grave (1). The resurrection affirms the deity of Christ (2) and assures believers of their future bodily resurrection (3).

10. The Ascension of Christ

Jesus ascended into heaven (1) to appear in the presence of God as our perpetual High Priest, presenting Himself as the only acceptable sacrifice for sin (2). He is the one and only Mediator between God and men (3), and Head of His church (4). He intercedes forever on behalf of His people (5) and rules over all things for their sake (6).

11. Election and Responsibility

Before the foundation of the world, God elected a great multitude of men and women to eternal life (1) as an act of His free grace alone. This election was in no way dependent upon His foresight of human faith, decision, works, or merit (2). In the unsearchable realm of God's sovereign will (3), all men remain responsible beings, subject to God's commands to repent and believe, and accountable to God for their rebellion, impenitence, and rejection of Christ (4).

12. Calling and Regeneration

To accomplish God's redemptive purpose (1), the Holy Spirit works effectively through the gospel of Christ (2), regenerating elect sinners (3) and drawing them irresistibly to repentance and saving faith (4).

13. Justification

The elect are declared righteous in the sight of God because of Christ's perfect life, His substitutionary death, and the imputation of His righteousness (1). Justification can never be the reward or result of human works or merit (2), nor does it grow out of an infusion of Christ's righteousness (3). It is granted through faith alone (4) in the person and work of Christ alone (5).

14. Sanctification

According to God's purpose in predestination, the justified are progressively conformed into the image of Christ (1). All true believers direct their will and affections toward this purpose (2), putting to death the desires and deeds of the flesh (3) by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (4) as God's Word is more fully understood and applied (5). While sinless perfection will never be attained in this life (6), it is a certainty in heaven (7).

15. Perseverance

All who are chosen, called, regenerated, and justified shall persevere in faith and never finally fall away (1). Perseverance is not a human accomplishment but a work of God through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who creates, sustains, and nourishes a living, growing, transforming, and enduring faith in all true believers (2).

16. The Church

The local church is the body of Christ and is under the authority of Christ alone (1). Nevertheless, qualified elders represent Him as they care for His body (2). Qualified deacons are to assist the elders as needs arise (3). Each member of the church is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to edify the body (4). The local church must recognize and fellowship with the universal body of Christ represented in other true churches (5).

17. Baptism

Baptism is the first act of Christian obedience (1). True baptism is immersion in water (2), signifying the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to new life (3), as well as cleansing from sin (4). Baptism may only be administered to those who demonstrate repentance from sin and make a credible profession of faith in Christ (5).

18. The Lord's Supper

Following their baptism, Christians may, and indeed, must regularly partake of the Lord's Supper (1). By breaking and eating the bread and drinking the cup, believers commemorate the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross (2). Through the Lord's Supper, they affirm and celebrate their oneness, their separation from the world, and their fellowship with Christ in the New Covenant (3).

19. Evangelism

It is the calling of every local church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded (1). It is a priority in evangelism to unite new believers with local churches (2).

20. The Return of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to raise the dead bodily, both righteous and unrighteous (1). The justified shall enjoy everlasting life in the presence of God in heaven, while the unjustified shall eternally endure God's wrath in hell (2).

21. The Old Covenant

The Old Covenant, with the Law of Moses as its core (1), was revealed to the nation of Israel (2), promising earthly blessings for obedience (3), and threatening curses for disobedience (4). Its purpose was never to offer eternal life (5), but rather to govern the life and worship of the Old Testament nation of Israel (6), to reveal the extent of man's depravity (7), and to foreshadow Christ and the New Covenant (8).

22. The New Covenant

The New Covenant, established through the Person and redemptive work of Christ (1), provides eternal blessings which are acquired by grace through faith (2). The Old Covenant was fulfilled in Christ, thus becoming obsolete (3). God's final words of revelation, given through Christ and His New Testament apostles and prophets (4), have become the authority concerning Christian conduct, and the interpretive lens through which the Old Testament must be understood, and applied (5).

23. The Glory of God

Christians must live for God's glory alone (1) through their awareness and enjoyment of His Person (2), submission to His authority (3), and reliance upon His goodness (4). In truth, all things that have or will transpire, serve to glorify God as their highest purpose, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Romans 11:36)

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

1. The Holy Scriptures

(1) Matt 4:4; Rom 1:16; 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 3:15-17; 1 Thess 2:13; Tit 1:3; Heb 4:12; 2 Pet 3:15-16

(2) Ps 19:7-9; 119:160; Prov 8:8; 30:5; Jn 17:17; 2 Corin 13:14; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21

(3) Isa 8:19-20; Psalm 138:2; Prov 30:6; Acts 17:11; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Tim 1:3; 6:3-5,20-21; 2 Jn 9-11

2. God and the Trinity

(1) Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 44:6; 45:5; 46:9

(2) Matthew 28:19; Titus 3:4-6

(3) *The Father*: Matthew 3:17; 6:9; John 17:1,5,11,21,25;

The Son: Matt 1:23; 3:17; Jn 1:1,14; 5:19-23; 8:58 (cf. Ex 3:14); Jn 10:31-33; 17:1,5,11,21,25;

Rom 9:5; Phil 2:5-6; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13; 3:4,6 (cf. Isaiah 43:11; 45:21); 2 Peter 1:1;

The Holy Spirit: Matt 1:18 (cf. Lu 1:35); Jn 14:16-17; Acts 5:3-4; Rom 8:9-11;

1 Corin 2:10-12; 12:11,18

(4) Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22-24; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:16

(5) Isaiah 42:1; 48:16; 61:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 5:19,30; 14:26; 2 Corin 13:14; Titus 3:4-6

(6) Matt 12:31-32; Jn 4:24; 5:23; 17:5; Heb 1:6; 10:29; Rev 4:11 (cf. Job 33:4); Rev 5:12-14

(7) *invisible* - John 1:18; 4:24; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 John 4:12;

eternal - Deuteronomy 33:27; Genesis 21:33; Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17;

omnipresent - Psalm 139:7-12; Proverbs 15:3;

almighty - Psalm 62:11; 65:6; Isaiah 40:15,28; Psalm 115:3;

all-knowing - Ps 147:5; Isaiah 40:13-14,28; 66:18; Romans 16:27; 1 Tim 1:17; Jude 25;

unchanging - Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17;

dependent upon none - Genesis 1:1; Acts 17:25;

sovereign - 1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Psalm 47:2; 115:3; Proverbs 21:1; Lamentations 3:37-38;

Isaiah 46:9-11; John 19:10-11; Ephesians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:15;

righteous - Ezra 9:15; Nehemiah 9:8; Psalm 89:14; 92:15; John 17:25;

holy - Psalm 99:3,5,9; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8;

just - Psalm 89:14; Isaiah 45:21; Romans 3:26;

gracious - Exodus 34:6; Jonah 4:2; 1 Peter 2:3;

loving - John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:1; 4:8-10 (cf. Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:10-15; Heb 12:5-8);

merciful - Exodus 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 136; Lam 3:22 (cf. Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:15);

patient - Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Jonah 4:2; 2 Peter 3:9;

good - Exodus 34:6; Psalm 34:8; Luke 18:19

3. Creation

(1) Genesis 1:1-31; Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Acts 17:24; Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3; Rev 4:11

(2) Genesis 1:1-2,26-28; Job 33:4; Psalm 33:6,9; 104:30; Jeremiah 10:12-13;

John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3

(3) Genesis 1:26-28; 9:6; Psalm 8:6-8; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9

4. Sovereign Providence

(1) Numbers 23:19; Job 38:4-41; Proverbs 16:33; Isaiah 46:9-11;

Ephesians 1:11; Acts 17:25,28; Hebrews 1:3

(2) Exodus 7:3-4; Proverbs 16:9; 21:1, Daniel 4:25,35; Matthew 10:29;

John 6:37-40; Acts 4:27-28; 13:48; Philippians 2:12-13

(3) Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 7:10 (cf. Romans 2:4); Hebrews 12:5-11

(4) Exod 9:16; Is 60:21; Ezek 28:20-23; Rom 9:22-23; 11:33-36; Eph 1:11-14

5. The Fall and Its Effects

(1) Genesis 1:26-31; Ecclesiastes 7:29

(2) Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22

(3) Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24

(4) Psalm 51:5; 58:3; Isaiah 48:8; Romans 3:19,23; 5:12,18,19; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:22

6. Man's Inability

(1) Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:28-32; 3:9-18; Titus 1:15

(2) Romans 6:16-22; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:13; 2 Tim 2:26; Titus 3:3

(3) Deuteronomy 32:41; Romans 5:10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21; James 4:4

(4) Acts 17:32; 26:22-24; 1 Corinthians 1:18,21; 2 Cor 2:15-16; Phil 3:18-19

(5) Deut 5:29; Jer 4:22; Jn 3:19-20; 6:44,65; 8:43,45,47,14:17; 15:5; Rom 1:21; 3:9-18; 8:6-8;

1 Corin 2:14; Ephesians 2:1; 4:17-19; Col 2:13; 2 Thess 3:2 (cf. 1 Corin 4:7; Hebrews 11:6)

7. The Birth and Life of Christ

(1) Matthew 1:21; John 1:29; 3:16-17; Philippians 2:5-8

(2) Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35

(3) John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:7-8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; John 1:14;

Romans 5:15, 18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:47-49; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:17

(4) John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26-28; 1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 John 3:5

(5) Galatians 4:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:21

8. The Death of Christ

(1) Mark 15:37,44; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Revelation 1:18; Romans 10:9

(2) 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 2:10; 9:9-14; 10:10-14

(3) John 19:28-30; Romans 3:23-25; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

(4) John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:28-34; Ephesians 5:25; Heb 10:12-14

9. The Resurrection of Christ

(1) Matthew 28:5-7; Luke 24:5-8, 39, 42-43

(2) Romans 1:4; John 2:19-21 (cf. 5:21,26); Acts 17:30-31

(3) Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:12-19,22; 2 Corin 4:14; Phil 3:20-21

10. The Ascension of Christ

(1) Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11

(2) Romans 4:25-5:1; Hebrews 7:23-25; 9:11-12,24; 10:4,14

(3) 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24

(4) Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18

(5) Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:23-25; 1 John 2:1

(6) 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Romans 8:37-39; Philippians 2:9-11

11. Election and Responsibility

(1) Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 13:48

(2) Romans 9:10-12; 11:5-10; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 1:9

(3) Deuteronomy 29:29; Job 11:7-9; 36:22-23; Isaiah 55:8-11; Romans 11:33-35; 1 Corin 2:16

(4) Mark 1:15; John 3:36; 6:37; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 1:18-21; 9:19-21; 2 Thess 1:8-10

12. Calling and Regeneration

(1) Isaiah 55:10-11; Ezekiel 34:11-13,16 (cf. Luke 19:10); 2 Thessalonians 2:13

(2) Romans 1:16; 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22-25; 1 Thess 1:4-5; 2 Thess 2:14

(3) Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 1:13; 3:3-8;

1 Corin 6:11; 2 Corin 4:6; 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:5b; James 1:18

(4) John 6:37,44-45,65; 10:16; Romans 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Heb 9:15

13. Justification

(1) Isaiah 53:11; Romans 4:5-8,11,16,20-25; 2 Corin 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18-19

(2) Romans 3:20-21,27-28; 4:1-4; Galatians 3:10-14; Titus 3:4-5

(3) Romans 4:5; 1 Timothy 1:15

(4) Genesis 15:6; John 1:11-12; Romans 1:17; 3:20,26-28; 4:5,20-21,24; 5:1;

Galatians 2:20-21; 3:2-3,5-9,11-13, 5:1-6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:9

(5) John 3:14-18,36; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 16:22

14. Sanctification

(1) Proverbs 4:18; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Thess 3:10; 4:3; 5:23

(2) Matthew 7:21; John 14:21,23a; 2 Timothy 2:19b; Hebrews 12:14;

James 2:14-26; 3 John 11; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 1 John 3:3

(3) Psalm 119:9-11; Matthew 5:6; Phil 3:14; Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:1-11

(4) Ezekiel 36:27; Romans 8:8-14; Philippians 2:13

(5) Psalm 1:1-3; 19:7-8; 119:9,11,133; Proverbs 2:1-9; John 17:17; Acts 20:32;

Eph 5:26; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:15-17; James 1:21-25; 1 Peter 2:1-3

(6) Proverbs 20:9; Philippians 3:12-14; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8,10

(7) 1 Corinthians 13:9-12; Ephesians 4:13; 5:27; Philippians 1:6;

1 Thessalonians 5:24; Hebrews 10:14; 12:1-2; Jude 24; Revelation 21:27

15. Perseverance

(1) John 5:24; 10:27-29; Romans 8:1-2; 28-39; Hebrews 3:14; 1 John 2:19

(2) Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 2:20; Phil 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:3-5

16. The Church

(1) 1 Corin 12:12-14; 1 Peter 2:4-5; Matthew 16:18; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23-24a

(2) Acts 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-4

(3) Acts 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:8-13

(4) 1 Corinthians 12:7,11; 14:12,26b, Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11

(5) Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 3:26 (cf. 1:2); 2 Corin 11:28; Col 4:16

17. Baptism

(1) Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,41; 8:37-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 31-34; 18:8

(2) Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-38

(3) Acts 19:3-5; Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:11-14

(4) Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22

(5) Matthew 28:19; John 1:12-13; Acts 2:38; 8:37

18. The Lord's Supper

(1) Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:25

(2) Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26

(3) Matthew 26:27-28; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,21; 11:25

19. Evangelism

(1) Matthew 9:36-38; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

(2) Ezek 34:11-14 (cf. Acts 20:28); Matt 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Corin 3:9; Eph 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:5

20. The Return of Christ

(1) John 5:28-29; 14:3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 9:28

(2) Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelation 20:15; 21:4; 22:3-5

21. The Old Covenant

(1) Exodus 19:4-5; 20:1-17 (cf. Exodus 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:28-29; Deut 4:13; 5:1-22; 1 Kings 8:9,21; Heb 9:4); Josh 8:30-35; 2 Chron 34:14-15,19,30; Ezra 3:2; Nehemiah 8:1-9; Matthew 19:3-8 (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1-4); John 1:17; Acts 15:5; Hebrews 10:28

(2) Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Romans 3:1-2; Galatians 2:14b

(3) Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:12-22; 11:13-15,26-29; 28:1-14

(4) Deuteronomy 11:16-17,26-29; 28:15-68

(5) John 5:39; Romans 3:19-21; 10:1-4; Galatians 2:16; 3:19-23; Hebrews 7:19

(6) Deuteronomy 4:5-6,14; 6:1-3; 10:12-13

(7) Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:7-11; Galatians 3:21-22

(8) Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (cf. Acts 3:14-24; 7:37,51-53); Luke 24:44;

John 5:39; Hebrews 9:6-14; 10:1; 13:11-12

22. The New Covenant

(1) Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:11-26; 13:20

(2) Romans 4:1-25; 6:14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7

(3) Matthew 5:17-20; Romans 6:14; 7:4,6; 10:4; 2 Corinthians 3:2-11; Galatians 3:24-25; 4:21-31;

Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:11-12, 18-19,22; 8:1-13; 10:9b

(4) John 1:17-18; 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5 (cf. John 16:12-13)

(5) Deut 18:15-19 (cf. Jn 12:49); Is 42:1-4; Matt 5:22,28,32,34,39,44; 28:20a; Jn 13:34-35; 14:15,21,23; 15:10,14; Acts 15:5,10,22-29; Rom 14:5-6; 1 Corin 9:21; Eph 2:20 (cf. 3:5 and Jn 16:12-14); Eph 6:2-3 (cf. Deut 5:16); Col 2:16-17 (cf. 2 Chron 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh 10:33); Col 3:1-17; Heb 7:12; 10:28-29 (cf. Deut 18:19; Jn 12:47-49)

23. The Glory of God

(1) Leviticus 10:3; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:4-6; Philippians 1:9-11

(2) Psalm 23:4; 46:1; 139:7-10,17-18; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 16:17; Matt 28:20; Hebrews 13:5

(3) 1 Sam 15:22-23; Eccles 12:13-14; Mic 6:8; Jn 15:8,14-16; Eph 2:10; Acts 5:32; Heb 12:28-29

(4) Ps 23; 34:7-10; Is 41:10; Matt 6:25-32; Lu 11:11-13; Acts 17:28; Rom 8:28-39; 2 Corin 1:3-4;

Grace Assembly Membership Statement

- As followers of Jesus Christ, we joyfully and thoughtfully enter into a bond of mutual edification,¹ fellowship,² and accountability³ with the other believers of this body under the name of Grace Assembly. I have repented of my sin,⁴ trusted in Christ as my only Savior and Lord,⁵ and have been baptized as a true believer.⁶
- May God's grace sustain us to faithfully participate within this local church in worship, prayer, study, fellowship, and the ordinances of baptism and communion.⁷ May this grace assist us to offer our spiritual gifts for the common good;⁸ through our involvement, and even sacrifice, that we may seek to illustrate within our own families and the watching world, the immense significance of life in the body of Christ.⁹
- In addition to the regular meetings of the church and in the spirit of a true disciple of Christ, we desire to be trained in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, seeking to develop Christian character, knowledge, and skills.¹⁰ Further, each member is responsible for ensuring that the teaching, doctrines, and general direction of the church are Biblically sound.¹¹
- May the Lord grant us doctrinal unity with a humble and teachable spirit,¹¹ willing to be taught according to our statement of faith¹²
- May we submit to one another in fellowship with all members, regardless of race, age, gender, background, social status, or level of education, since all are of equal value in Christ.¹³
- May we find grace to pursue peace, looking for opportunities to do good to all people, but especially with other believers, always being slow to take offense and eager to reconcile.¹⁴ May we thereby shun gossip and

divisive words, knowing that they are destructive to Christian fellowship.¹⁵

- May the Spirit of Christ cause us to live a life that is above reproach. And may we be just and honest in our dealings and faithful in our responsibilities and commitments. May we abide by the standards of sexual purity and ethical integrity as taught in the Bible.¹⁶
- May we seek the preservation of marriage, knowing that God hates divorce.¹⁷
- May we find grace to watch over each other¹⁸ through prayer,¹⁹ helping in sickness and distress,²⁰ promoting spiritual growth,²¹ restraining from sin,²² and stirring up love and good deeds.²³
- May we submit to the church's discipline upon each of us and lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.²⁴
- May we contribute cheerfully and regularly to this church for its general ministry and expenses, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. May we be faithful stewards of all our resources, avoiding all forms of greed.²⁵
- May we seek the salvation of our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and people of all nations.²⁶
- In summary, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ cause us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and may we love others as Christ has loved us.²⁷

Scripture Proofs:

¹ Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26; Ephesians 4:16, 29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

² Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 2:1-4

³ Proverbs 27:17; Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; James 5:16; 2 John 8

⁴ Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:1-5; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:10

⁵ John 3:16; Acts 4:12; 16:30-31; Romans 10:9-10

⁶ Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 10:47-48

⁷ Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 10:24-25

⁸ Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 18-27; Ephesians 4:11-16

⁹ Matthew 6:19-21, 24-26; 16:24; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 4:1-5; 1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 John 2:15-17

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:17-18

¹¹ Acts 17:10-11

¹² Psalm 133:1; Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 2:2

¹³ Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 4:16; Titus 1:9; 2:1; Hebrews 13:17; James 3:1

¹⁴ Romans 10:12; Galatians 3:26-28; James 2:1-5

¹⁵ Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18; 13:1-5; 14:19; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Colossians 3:12-15; Hebrews 12:14; James 1:19-20

¹⁶ Proverbs 6:16-19; 10:19; Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:29, 31; 1 Timothy 5:13; Titus 3:10-11; James 3:6-10

¹⁷ Proverbs 10:9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:16, 37; Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 6:3; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; Titus 2:6-8; Hebrews 13:4

¹⁸ Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7

- ¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:24; Galatians 6:1-2, 10; Philippians 2:4
²⁰ 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 1:19; 1
Thessalonians 5:25; James 5:14-16
²¹ Matthew 25:34-40; Romans 12:13, 15; Galatians 6:2, 10;
Philippians 4:14; 1 John 3:16-18
²² Titus 2:1-15; Hebrews 5:12-14; 2 Peter 3:17-18
²³ Proverbs 24:11; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:20; James 5:19-20
²⁴ Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:1-10; 3:8, 14; Hebrews 10:24; 13:16
²⁵ Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15;
1 Timothy 5:20
²⁶ Malachi 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 9:6-7; Philippians 4:18
²⁷ Matthew 9:36-38; 28:18-20; Romans 10:14-15; 1 Corinthians
9:19-22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15
²⁸ Mark 12:28-31; John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; 1 John
3:16-19; 4:7-21