



## **Core Beliefs**

Willow Creek's core beliefs describe our theological positions on key aspects of faith. Centered in Christ and His message, ours is a biblical theology rather than a theology that is speculative, subjective, or merely rooted in tradition. These beliefs are derived directly from Scripture (both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible).

## **The Bible**

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible—the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe Scripture in its entirety originated with God and He revealed it to chosen authors. Scripture speaks with the authority of God while simultaneously reflecting the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of these human authors. We hold that the Scriptures, in their original manuscripts, are infallible and inerrant; they are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice. There are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

## **God**

We believe there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three equal persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the beginning, God demonstrated His power, wisdom, and goodness by creating the world and everything in it. Through His divine power and providence, God continues to sustain His creation, operating within history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

## **Salvation**

The central purpose of God's revelation in Scripture is to call people into fellowship with Him. Originally created to be in relationship with God, humans defied Him by going their own independent way, resulting in alienation from Him and the innate inability to please God. This fall took place at the beginning of human history; since then all people have suffered these consequences and are in need of the saving grace of God.

The salvation of humanity is completely a work of God's free grace; it is not in any way the result of human works or goodness. Each person can receive salvation by repentance and faith. God's Word assures individuals that He will continue His saving work in them forever.

## **Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ, the eternal second person of the Trinity, was fully united with a human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived in perfect obedience to the Father, voluntarily paid the price for the sins of all people by dying on the cross as their substitute, and satisfied divine justice, bringing salvation to all who trust in Him alone. After His physical death, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father as the only intercessor between God and humans. He promises to return to earth, personally and visibly, to fulfill history and the eternal plan of God.



### **The Christian Life (The Holy Spirit)**

People in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ are to live in holiness and obedience as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit applies Christ's saving work by enlightening the minds of sinners to their need to be saved. He renews and indwells each believer upon salvation, becoming their source of assurance, strength, wisdom, and gifting for building up the church. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Bible. Appropriated by faith, His power and control empower believers to lead a life of Christ-like character and bear fruit for the Father's glory.

### **Human Destiny**

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. All humanity will experience a bodily resurrection and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. Having rejected God, unbelievers will suffer eternal condemnation apart from Him. Believers will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in this life.

### **The Church**

All who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are united with Him as members of His body, the one true church. Scripture commands believers to gather for worship, prayer, fellowship, and the teaching of the Word; to observe Baptism and Communion as established by Jesus Christ; to offer service to the body through development and use of talents and gifts and outreach to the world. The local expression of the church is wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command. Cared for and led by Elders and leaders, church members are to work together in love and unity for the ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ.

### **Faith and Practice**

In all matters of faith and practice, Scripture is the final authority. In matters where Scripture is silent, believers should conscientiously seek to be led by God because it is to Him alone he or she is ultimately responsible.