Humanity

We believe in the inherent dignity and value of every person, as created in God's image and likeness, male and female, to be in fellowship with God and serve God's purposes in creation.

Humans are the pinnacle of God's creation. They are unique amongst all of creation because only humans are made in the image and likeness of God.

- We possess morality
- We possess mental intellect.
- We are creative.
- We are emotional beings and feel depths of emotion more than any other creature.
- We are relational. Only humans get married. For humans the sex act is more than an animal function. (or it should be).
- We were given dominion.
- We are spiritual creatures. We won't find animals praying for salvation. We are eternal creatures.

It is because we are made in God's image and in his likeness, that we have inherent dignity.

- It means that we value the life of the unborn child.
- It means that we value the life of the disabled, the infirm, and of people in their old age.

- It means we respect those of different races, different politics, different faiths.

We can disagree with someone, and believe their actions are sinful, but that does not mean we should be disagreeable.

We believe (we were created) **to be in fellowship with God and serve God's purposes in creation.**

When God created the plant he spoke to the land.

> *"Let the Land produce vegetation… plants and trees." GENESIS 1:11*

When God wanted to make fish, He spoke to the water:

> *"Let the water team with living creatures." GENESIS 1:20*

When he wanted to create birds, He spoke to the air.

> *"Let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." GENESIS 1:20*

When he created living creatures He spoke to the land.

> *"Let the land produce living creatures.." GENESIS 1:24*

But its interesting when he came to man the pattern changed.

> "Let us make mankind" GENESIS 1:26

When God makes plants and animals he spoke to the environment of land they were to live. The land.

When God makes fish, he speaks to the environment in which they were to live. The waters.

When God makes the birds he speaks to the environment in which they were to live. The sky.

But when he created humanity he spoke to the environment of himself because he created us to live and move and have our being in Him!

CS Lewis and others have said: "When we enjoy Him, we glorify Him." How do you think we glorify Him when we enjoy Him? (You can also replace the word enjoy for trust.)

Yet on account of the universal sinfulness of all people due to the Fall, humanity is subject to God's righteous wrath and condemnation.

What is Sin. Let's look at some Hebrew words.

- *chattath* = missing the mark, erring
- *pesha* = active rebellion, a trespass or transgression of God's will
- *shagah* = going astray
- *awon* = related to a verbal form meaning to twist and refers to the guilt sin produces

Let's look at some Greek words:

- *Hamartia* = missing the mark, failure, fault, concrete wrong doing.
  All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God Romans 3:23
- *Adikia* = unrighteousness, injustice
- *Parabasis* = breach of the law
- *Asebeia* = godlessness
- *Ptaio* = moral stumble

The most characteristic feature of sin is that it is directed against God.

> *Against you, you only, have I sinned*
> *and done what is evil in your sight;*
> *so you are right in your verdict*
> *and justified when you judge. PSALM 51:4*

The prodigal son said to his father:

> *I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' LUKE 15:21*

The theologian Bruce Milne said this:

> *The clearest expression of sin is Satan's suggestion that man could usurp the place of his maker.*
>
> *You will be like God. GENESIS 3:5*

We believe in … the universal sinfulness of all people due to the fall.

The bible says sin is universal everyone is affected.

> *"There is no one righteous, not even one." ROMANS 3:10*

> *"No man living is righteous before you" PSALM 143:2*

Our "righteousness" is measured against God, not man.

Does the common man in the street believe he's decent, or a sinner? What does his answer tell you?

Sin affects the whole human being.

a) It affects our will.

Paul, speaking of the time when we were dead in our trespasses and sins wrote to the Ephesians.

> *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. EPHESIANS 2:3*

b) It affects our thinking.

> *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. EPHESIANS 4:17*

c) It affects our emotions.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 TIM 6:10

d) It affects our behaviour.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. GALATIANS 5:19-21

It affects the whole human being. Man is rotten to the core.

For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder… all these evils come from inside and make a man "unclean". MARK 7:21

Sin affects us all, mankind misses the mark entirely. However hard man tries, he is unable to save himself from the consequences of sin.

It's what theologians call **total depravity.**

Yet on account of the universal sinfulness of all people due to the Fall

We are counted guilty because of Adam's Sin

> *"Therefore sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." ROMANS 5:12*
>
> *One man's trespass led to condemnation for all men… as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. ROMANS 5:18-19*

We have a sinful nature because of Adam's sin.

> *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. PSALM 51:5*

Yet on account of the universal sinfulness of all people due to the Fall, humanity is subject to God's righteous wrath and condemnation.

> *For the wages of sin is death. ROMANS 6:23*

Salvation

We believe in the necessity for salvation, of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which the sinner is pardoned and accepted as righteous in God's sight. This justification is imputed by the grace of God because of the atoning work of Christ, is received by faith alone and is evidenced by the Fruit of the Spirit and a holy life.

We believe in the necessity for salvation. Man cannot save himself, he needs someone else to save him.

How are we going to be saved?

We believe in the necessity for salvation, of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does it mean to repent?

Now the Greek word literally means “to change your mind” or think differently, which leads to a change of actions.

Repentance is not simply deciding that you are going to stop sinning. It means that you are going to stop, and turn around from your sin and towards God.

Evangelists will have an illustration that when the Roman Centurion was wanted to command his soldiers to do an about turn, he would shout out “repent”. Repentance is not “halt” it is turning from your sin (trusting yourself) and turning towards God and trusting what Jesus has done for you in his atoning work on the cross.

It starts with a changing of the mind.

The prodigal son asked for his inheritance, and squandered his wealth in wild living. He ended up feeding pigs, and was so hungry he could have eaten the pig swill.

Now listen to what v17 says:

> ***When he came to his senses****, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father. LUKE 15:17*

Now here is a thought for you. Paul says;

> *God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance. Romans 2:4*

The prodigal came to repentance, not when he thought of his father's badness, but when he thought of his father's goodness.

The call to repent is not a message of anger, "*repent or fry in hell"* it's a message of love, "*there is something much better – abundant life in God*".

The Gospel is Good News. It's a message of love not condemnation.

The Gospel always starts with Love.

Where does the Gospel start?

REVELATION 13:8 tells us that *the lamb was slain,* (referring to Jesus) *before the creation of the world.*

And you say, didn't Jesus die on the cross 2,000 years ago? Yes, but the decision was made before creation.

> *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* *1 PETER 1:20*

How should the fact the Gospel starts with love affect the way we approach evangelism?

We believe in the necessity for salvation, of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by which the sinner is pardoned and accepted as righteous in God's sight. This justification is imputed by the grace of God because of the atoning work of Christ, is received by faith alone.

> *For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.* *ROMANS 5:19*

It doesn't mean that the moment we repent and turn to God we become perfect. But it does mean we have changed direction. It means that we have put God on the throne of our lives. It's not that we have to try harder to be holy; as we focus

on him spend time with him, surrender to him, He transforms us.

> *We Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him. 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18*

Salvation is evidence by the Fruit of the Holy Spirit and a Holy life.

What difference did you see in your life when you repented and trusted in Jesus?

Were those changes immediate? What does this say about the Christian life?

N.B. True Christianity is allowing God to change us from the inside, not us trying to change ourselves from the outside.