

# FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING

**FAITH**COMMUNITY



WE MAKE DISCIPLES WHO PLANT THE CHURCH

---

## 1 Peter 1:3-5:

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Our aim is to provide theologically consistent teaching for our church family. The elders and pastoral staff of Faith Community Church share a framework of theology that is often referred to as Reformed Theology and may also be known as the Doctrines of Grace or Calvinism.

From a historical point of view the 5<sup>th</sup> century writings of Augustine reflect much of this understanding. Reformed theology crystallized in the teachings of some of the great European reformers such as Zwingli, Calvin, and Luther during the reformation of the church during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Any trustworthy teaching must emerge from an accurate handling of the Word of God. While we continue learning, we believe this framework of theology faithfully represents the teaching of the Word of God and the faith of the apostles.

Embracing this view is not a requirement for membership and we do not see it as a matter of fellowship. We warn those who might be tempted to parrot this position simply because it is the view of our teachers. Each believer has the responsibility to continually study all of God's Word in order to come to a fuller understanding of truth and knowledge of our Savior. Perhaps the overriding characteristic of this view of theology is its emphasis on the glory and sovereignty of God. All things are being worked out, not for man's honor, but God's glory:

Romans 11:36: *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

God is the Ruler and King. He is working out his eternal purposes among the nations, in his church, and in each person.

Psalms 135:6: *The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.*

---

We believe the Scriptures teach the sovereignty of God in all things, even the salvation of each individual person. The outworking of God's grace is overwhelming and involves several key concepts.

Sin has placed mankind in a desperate and hopeless situation (Rom. 3:9-18). Sin entered the human race through the fall of Adam and brought disastrous consequences upon all of his descendants. The Bible states Adam was our representative and his sin affected each of us (Rom. 5:12-21). It brought legal condemnation on the entire human race. We are born with a sin nature and have also personally sinned. Every area of our life has been affected by sin. Apart from Christ we are dead in sin (Eph. 2:1-3). In fact, even our will has become so corrupted and enslaved that we are unable to choose God unless he first moves within our hearts and minds to give us the desire and ability to choose him (2Cor.4:4; Eph. 2:4-9). Without God's gracious moving within us by his Holy Spirit we would continue to go our own way. The Bible's picture of mankind is not flattering, but it confronts us with the depth and reality of the captivating power of sin, which enslaves us all (Rom. 1:18-32).

It is God's initiative and mercy that changes the course of any man or woman (John 1:12-13; Titus 3:4-7). Salvation requires a new birth brought about by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3; 5-8; 1 Cor. 15:50-51). Salvation is an act of God's grace in Christ. In fact, before the worlds were ever created the Father's plan was to reveal His glory by expressing His saving grace to some who would become part of His family (Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

Redeeming man required radical action. God sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to rescue his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21; Gal. 1:3-5). Foretold by the Prophets (Isa. 53:10-12); Jesus became the substitute (2 Cor. 5:21) to pay the debt of sin forever through His blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 1:3).

As followers of Christ we have the joy and responsibility of declaring the Gospel (Rom.10:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:21) to all people (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 13:10; 15-16). God's Spirit calls out of the world those He has chosen, enables them to respond to the gospel (Acts 16:14), to believe in Christ, turn from their sin (1 Pet. 1:23) and live for His glory (Eph. 1:11-15).

We did not first love God, but God first loved us (1 John 4:10). We cannot boast in anything we have done that might merit God's favor. Our only boast is in the Savior who died on our behalf (Gal. 6:14) and whose death and resurrection has secured our salvation (Titus 2:14).

Since the work of salvation originated in God it will be carried out by God - he always finishes what he starts (Phil. 1:6; Rom. 11:29). Those who have come to Christ will be kept by God (1 Pet. 1:3-5). Our salvation is of the Lord, from beginning to its completion (Jonah 2:9; Rom. 1:16).

When our eyes are opened to our desperate spiritual condition we can not overcome, it is then that we catch our first glance of the amazing grace of the sovereign and merciful One who would rescue the defiant (Rom. 9:22-24). God is mighty to save anyone He will. And, all the Father gives to Christ will come to Him. He is not subject to the will of man. Jesus said, *"All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out"* (John 6:37).

---

Total dependence on God does not minimize the necessary participation of humans but elevates it. We are to live lives of devotion giving clear evidence of God's work in us as we pursue holiness. (John 15:1-17) Likewise, the assurance of salvation comes as His people walk in response to His leading and submit to His rule in all of life (1 John 2:28-29; 3:9-10; 5:1-5).

God alone receives honor for saving people - man responds, and makes a legitimate choice (Jn. 3:36, 6:35-40, Acts 2:38-40). But, that choice to respond in faith can only be made because God has so worked within the person to enable the response of faith (1 Thess.1:4-6; 2 Cor. 4:3-4). This necessarily humbles man and glorifies God (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

It is a gift to recognize the depth and desperation of sin and grasp the value of Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf. Faith and grace come from God alone (Eph.2:8-9). We stand before Him in humility and worship through transformed lives and pursue growth in godliness for His glory. We look in awe to God and the wonder of His mercy and grace and say, "Wow"!

*Eph. 1:3-6: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

Our hope is that this brief introduction will enhance the consistency of our teaching and increase understanding for our entire church family. Even when there might be disagreement we should continue learning of God together in a manner that will honor Christ.

We will all have the opportunity to be patient with each other as we wrestle with the deep things of God honorably. We believe all the wrestling is worth it. He is the rock of strength in a world of quicksand.

*Col 1:28: Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

Approved 2/18/09 revised MT 3/3/09-Elders 3/4/09-MT 3/10/09