



WILLINGDON
CHURCH



Gospel Summary

Willingdon Church Position Papers



Gospel Summary

Willingdon Church Elders
(Reaffirmed Nov, 2024)

GOD: God exists. He created the entire universe. His Spirit gives life to and sustains all that is (Gen 1-2; Romans 1, 8; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3; John 1:1-5). All people are created in God's image and are created for relationship with God (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:15-25; Psalm 8:3-5). This includes all ethnic groups, language groups, and nations.

SINFUL INDEPENDENCE: People seek to exist independently of God (Eph. 2:1-3; James 4:1-7). Although they are created for intimacy with God, they choose to meet their needs following their own paths or the alternatives offered by society (Romans 1:18-32). In essence, they live as if they were their own gods (Gen. 3:4-6). People are by nature self-centred and selfish. Tragically, the consequence of sin is spiritual death (separation from God) and physical death (John 3:16-18; Romans 6:23).

LOVE: God is personal. He sees people who live estranged from him, themselves and the world around them. He feels their pain as they suffer mentally and emotionally, struggle with interpersonal relationships, strive to understand their spiritual dimension, and face troublesome global forces beyond their control. He has answers to their most profound questions (i.e., origin, suffering, spirituality, belonging, purpose, future). He longs to restore their relationship with himself. Based on his grace and compassion alone, He takes the initiative

to draw people to himself (Exodus 15:2-3; 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Psalm 8; 23; 139; Isaiah 55:8-9; 66:12-13; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hosea 11:1-4).

JESUS: Out of love for humanity, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16-17). Jesus not only revealed God to humanity (John 1:10-14, 18; Heb. 2:14-18), but he also took humanity's sin upon himself (Romans 3:22-26; 5:8). Jesus is the Good News and the centre of the entire biblical story. Through Jesus, men and women can be reconciled to God.

What is the effect of this reconciliation on a disciple of Christ?

This reconciliation encompasses at least six themes (addressing the effects of sin on humanity): penal substitution (guilt); Christ the Victor (fear); family adoption (shame); new creation (brokenness); peace (alienation/anxiety); meaning (despair).

1. **Guilt:** The barriers between people and God are broken. The price for humanity's sin is paid by Jesus at the cross (John 3:16-17, 1 John 4:9-10; Heb. 4:14-16). Followers of Jesus no longer live under condemnation but are forgiven (Romans 3:10-12, 21-26; 8:1).
2. **Fear:** The power of sin over people is broken. People are freed to experience healing on all levels (1 Cor. 15:55-77; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:18-21). They have no need

to fear evil and the Evil One (1 John 4:17-18; John 10:27-29)

3. **Shame:** People have the opportunity to be transformed into Christ's likeness (mind, will, emotions, spirit) and live as God's friends (2 Cor. 5:17-21). They take on a new identity in the family of God (Eph. 1:3-6; Romans 8:14-17)
4. **Brokenness:** People who open themselves to Jesus' restorative power are made a new creation and experience healing (Luke 4:18-19; Eph. 2:1-10; 2 Cor. 5:21). Disciples of Christ walk toward wholeness – peace, holiness, righteousness, justice (1 Thess. 5:9, 23-24).
5. **Alienation/Anxiety:** Jesus is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:1-6; Acts 4:8-12; 1 Tim. 2:4-6). He opens the way to the Father's presence. Deep intimacy with God and profound peace can be experienced by all who trust in Jesus (Hebrews 10:19-25; John 15; 17:20-23).
6. **Despair:** Jesus provides meaning, a future, a hope and a purpose for those who suffer from meaninglessness, disillusionment and hopelessness (Jeremiah 29:11-14; Romans 8:28-30; Phil. 1:21; 3:12-16; Heb. 12:1-3)

RELATIONSHIP: God wants to be in relationship with people. How do people respond? How do people make personal what God did through Jesus?

1. **Self-Awareness:** Each person needs to acknowledge their independent spirit, own their selfishness and self-centredness, and admit they are missing God's mark of holiness (Jer. 17:9-10; 1 Cor. 4:3-5; Rom. 3:10-12, 21-24; Eph. 2:1-3).

2. **Repentance:** Each person needs to own his or her sin, confess his or her brokenness, and open himself/herself to a new relationship with God (1 John 1:8-2:2). God offers forgiveness and reconciliation as a free gift (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10).
3. **Faith:** Each person needs to put their trust in Jesus and his saving work, through his death and resurrection (John 1:12-13, 5:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-13). Even our choice to deposit our faith in Jesus for salvation is an act of God's grace upon us.
4. **Submission:** Each person needs to submit to Jesus' Lordship over their lives (Romans 12:1-2; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6-8). Salvation is a complete reordering of one's life (2 Cor. 5:17).
5. **Intimacy:** When a person accepts Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Jesus sends his Spirit to live within the person. He/she experiences deep relationship with God. The Holy Spirit leads them on the path of love for God and fellow human beings (Rom. 8:9-17, 26-28; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:7).
6. **Obedience:** A person who accepts Jesus as Saviour and Lord becomes his disciple. A disciple follows and emulates Jesus (John 15:9-17; 1 John 2:3-6).

HEALING: Intimacy with God (union with Christ) is the key to life. A person's relationship with God brings healing on many levels:

1. **Personal:** Disciples are renewed in their thinking (granted the mind of Christ), are freed to make good decisions, and experience emotional peace (Romans 12:1-2; Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Cor. 2:16, 13:9-13; Phil. 4:4-7; 1 Pet. 5:6-7). They experience deliverance

from spiritual oppression and often experience physical healing.

2. **Communal:** Followers of Jesus are called into a community that worships God, develops deep family relationships, grows together in unity, and lives on a mission to reach others with the Good News (Acts 2:43-47; Eph. 4:1-16; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 12:12-26; John 17:20-23).
3. **Societal:** Followers of Jesus experience a healing reorientation in relation to all spheres of life: marriage and family (Eph. 5:21-6:4), sexuality (Gen. 1:26-28; 1 Cor. 6:12-20), social class and ethnic differences (Col. 3:9-11; James 2:1-9), finances and leisure (Mat. 6:24-34; 1 Tim. 6:6-12; Ex. 20:8-11), government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4), and the environment (Gen. 1:26-31, 2:15; Rom. 8:18-22).
4. **Missional Purpose:** Followers of Jesus are recreated in Christ for good works (Eph. 2:8-10). Their lives are given new purpose. They are called to love God with all their being and love all people as themselves (Matt. 22:37-40; 28:18-20). In the name of Jesus, they minister healing to the nations.

