

God is sovereign Lord of all creation. That statement is the bedrock of my faith and all other aspects of my faith stem and flow from that one truth. God created the world and all creation remains open to God's direct involvement. God is active in creation with the purpose of establishing the Kingdom of God and redeeming creation from the bondage to sin and death. God is a speaking and revealing God. As created beings of God, we know God because of God's initiative in making Godself known.

God's most direct revelation came in the form of Jesus the Christ, God's Son. It is through Jesus that God most clearly speaks of God's purpose and love for creation. It is through Jesus that the Kingdom of God broke into our current existence. Jesus' birth, life, and teaching communicate the welcoming nature of God. Jesus also communicates God's sense and purpose of justice to pursue and lift up those who have been marginalized and oppressed. These have been called into God's Kingdom. This is the gospel. The Powers that Be saw fit to crucify Jesus and through the supreme act of non-violent, self-sacrificing love, the Son of God laid down his life. The victory of God comes when death does not have the final word but rather life. The resurrection of Christ opens the door for all humanity to respond to God in faith and be welcomed into the Kingdom of God.

The work of Christ is made effective to individuals through the work of the Holy Spirit. Humanity, unable to come to God on their own, is called by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works to give faith, regenerate, and justify people; continuing the work that Christ began. Throughout their lives the faith of individuals grows through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is sanctification and growth in grace. The Spirit of God uses circumstances, spiritual practices, and the community of faith (the church) to preserve disciples of Jesus and assist them in persevering. The work of redemption which was initiated by God, completed by Christ, will be brought to consummation through the working of the Holy Spirit.

God has given God's people the church to provide community and to continue to the advancement of God's Kingdom begun in the work of Jesus. The Church has been given the Word and Sacrament, both of which are used by God's Spirit to display and to seal God's work in the hearts of God's people. The church is connectional and confessional. The church is both visible and invisible. It is the already/but not yet Kingdom of God active and working in the world. The mission of God's people is to continue to spread the gospel, to display the love of God through acts of mercy to neighbor, and to continue to stand with the marginalized and oppressed against those who would use power to coerce and take advantage. This is done through non-violent, peaceful, and prophetic acts of resistance. This work is the continued work of Christ.

God's people are strengthened by the hope of the coming Kingdom of God. This future reality is when heaven and earth become one and the reign of God becomes manifest here as it is in heaven. Our work is a shadow of that which is to come. In this coming Kingdom all earthly Kingdoms will bow their knee to Jesus and acknowledge him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is to Jesus that all glory and power and blessing and honor will be given forever and ever. AMEN.