

Maranatha Bible Church Philosophy of Ministry

Our Premise

Our premise is that the truths contained in Scripture need to drive all that we do in life and ministry. We believe that the inerrant, inspired Word has authority over and is fully sufficient for every issue we encounter. The following essential truths contained in Scripture comprise the most basic components which form the foundation upon which Maranatha Bible Church is built:

The Centrality of God

We believe that there is one true God (Deut 6:4; Is 45:5-7) who is supreme in all His nature and attributes. He is the creator of all things (Gen 1:1), has existed from all eternity (Ps 90:2), is sovereign over all (Ps 103:19), and continually directs, maintains and controls everything (1 Chron 29:11-12). God exists in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19). He consistently works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph 1:11) accomplishing what He has ordained in eternity past (Is 46:8-11) for the praise of His glory (Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Rom 11:36), even using the sin of men to accomplish His purposes (Gen 50:21). Because God is glorious (Ps 24:10) and majestic (Ps 8:1, 9), our premise at MBC is that He is worthy of worship (Ps 95:6), praise (Ps 150), and blessing (Ps 103:1, 2) and should be treasured (Ps 16:11) and delighted in (Ps 37:4) by all.

The Supremacy of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (John 3:16) and is the second Person of the Trinity (Matt 28:19). He is the creator (John 1:3; Heb 1:2) and sustainer (Col 1:17) of all things. He was born of a virgin (Is 7:14; Matt 1:23) and lived a sinless life as God incarnate (John 1:1,14). He died a substitutionary atoning death on the cross (Rom 5:8), rose again from the dead (Rom 1:4; Acts 2:24), and ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). He is the mediator between God and man who makes intercession for His people (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). One day, He will return to gather the church for Himself at the rapture (1 Cor 15:51-52) and will personally return to the earth with His Church in glory (1 Thess 3:13; Jude 14-15) to establish His millennial kingdom and reign on the throne of David (Is 9:6; Luke 1:31-33). As such, Jesus Christ will be the final judge of all men (John 5:22-23; Acts 17:30-31). Because of the greatness of Christ, our premise at MBC is that we are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Matt 22:37), seeking Him such that we might not be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:3).

The Sufficiency of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person (John 14:26; 16:13) who comprises the third member of the Trinity (Matt 3:16-17). He was instrumental in the creation of the world (Gen 1:2) and the inspiration of the Word of God (2 Pet 1:21). His ministry is to convict sinners of sin (John 16:8), regenerate the hearts of the elect (John 3:5; Titus 3:5), indwell believers (1 Cor 3:6), incorporate them into the body of Christ at conversion (1 Cor 12:13), and seal believers for a future inheritance (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:22). He also fills believers for daily obedience (Gal 5:22-25; Eph 5:18), teaches them God's truth (1 Cor 2:12), guides believers (Rom 8:14), prays for believers (Rom 8:26), and bestows believers with spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7). Because of His work in salvation and sanctification, our premise at MBC is that the Holy Spirit is essential to our spiritual lives individually and the growth and equipping of the body of Christ corporately.

The Authority of the Word

We believe that the Bible is God's Word and that each word in it is fully inspired (2 Tim 3:16) and without error in the original (Ps 19:7-9; Is 30:8; Matt 5:18, John 10:35; 17:17). Each of the writers of the Bible was moved by the Holy Spirit and wrote the very words of God (2 Pet 1:20-21). As a result, the Word is alive (Heb 4:12), that which God uses to accomplish His purposes (Is 55:10-11), and what saves sinners (James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23) and changes lives (2 Tim 3:17). The Word is completely sufficient for all of life and ministry (2 Pet 1:3) and is that which alone determines what to believe and how to live to the glory of God (Acts 17:11). It stands as absolute truth to be known and applied in every area of life. As such, Scripture is the very foundation upon

which the church is built and comprises not only the content of the message that the church proclaims (2 Tim 4:2) but also the methods by which the church operates. Therefore, our premise at MBC is that, because God has spoken to us in the Bible, we aim, at every level, to allow His Word to inform our minds so we can know Him and enflame our hearts so we can worship Him.

The Depravity of Man

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) on the sixth day of creation (Gen 2:7) and that in his original state he was innocent, without sin, and holy (Gen 1:27, 31; 2:25). Despite this design, however, man rationally and volitionally chose to rebel against his Creator (Gen 3:6-7) by disobeying God's specific instructions (Gen 2:16-17). This act of rebellion plunged the human race into sin and death (Rom 5:12) resulting in mankind's separation from God (Is 59:2). Because of Adam's sin, he passed down a sin nature to his progeny (Rom 5:17-19) that renders all men fallen sinners who naturally rebel against God's loving rule and authority in their life (Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:10-12). All men (Rom 3:23) are born in sin (Ps 51:5) which causes them to be enslaved to their sin (Rom 6:17; Titus 3:3), spiritually blind (2 Cor 4:4), darkened in their understanding (Eph 4:18), alienated and hostile in mind (Col 1:21), and spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3). The natural man is totally incapable of producing works to commend himself to God (Is 64:6). As a result, mankind is worthy of the wrath of God (Rom 1:18; 5:6; Col 3:6) and eternal death (Rom 6:23) and, therefore, hopelessly lost (Eph 2:12). Therefore, our premise at MBC is that each person needs to understand their desperate condition so that they can also participate in God's wonderful plan to save sinners from condemnation.

The Majesty of Salvation

We believe that, despite man's sinful condition, God demonstrated his great grace and love by sending His Son to be our substitute (Rom 5:8). Christ's death satisfied God's wrath against sin (1 Thess 1:10), made it possible for that sin to be removed (Col 1:21-22), and serves as the basis for Christ's righteousness being granted to believers (2 Cor 5:21). God lovingly offers salvation as a free gift (Rom 3:24) not on the basis of works (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:9; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5) to all (Matt 11:28-29). Before the foundation of the world, God chose those whom He would save from sin (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-11; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10). This choice was entirely unconditional (Rom 9:11; Eph 2:8-9) and designed to bring Him glory (Eph 1:5-6) as the One who graciously bestows mercy on whom He desires (Rom 9:14-24). Yet, the truth of election does not nullify man's responsibility to believe in Christ as Savior (John 3:16-18; 5:40) and to repent of their sins (Acts 2:38; 20:21; 26:20, 1 Thess 1:9). All those who submit themselves to the lordship of Christ and come to Him for salvation will be saved (Luke 6:46; John 3:36; Rom 10:9; Phil 2:9-11). In doing so, they become new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) who walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4) and are kept secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-44; 10:27-30; Rom 8:30-39). Therefore, our premise at MBC is that it is the kindness of God that leads to salvation (Rom 2:4) and we want all peoples to know the wonderful news about how to have their sins forgiven and possess eternal life.

The Primacy of the Church

We believe that the church is a living organism, distinct from Israel, and made up of true believers who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:5). Christ so loved the church that He died for her (Eph 5:25) in order that He might sanctify her and present her to Himself in all her glory, blameless and without spot or blemish (Eph 5:26-27). Because of this, Christ nourishes and cherishes the church (Eph 5:29) and is, therefore, head of it (Eph 1:22; 5:23, Col 1:18). The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15) and God's household, which has been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). It is through the church that believers are equipped to live a God-honoring life (Eph 4:11-13) and unbelievers are presented with the Good News of the Gospel (Matt 28:19-20). As such, the church is a place where fellow believers practice the one-anothers in loving relationships, exercise their spiritual gifts to build up the church (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7-10; 1 Pet 4:10), and stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24). Therefore, our premise at MBC is that the church constitutes God's primary vehicle for working in this age and that believers are to engage fully in the life of a local church.

The Certainty of the End

We believe that Jesus Christ is coming again and that we are eagerly awaiting His literal, earthly, bodily return (1 Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20; Titus 2:13; 1 Pet 1:13). Although the exact moment of His return is unknown (Matt 24:36, 43), it is certain and imminent (1 Pet 4:7). When He comes (Rev 19:11-19), Christ will establish His kingdom and will rule and reign with believers on earth for 1,000 years (Rev 20:2-3). After that, Satan and his forces will be bound in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10) along with all those who rejected Christ (Rev 20:11-15) and God will establish a new heaven and earth in which believers will enjoy perfect fellowship with Him for all eternity (Rev 21-22). Thus, history is moving to a divinely-designed end which God has already determined from eternity past (Is 46:9-10). In the end, Christ is revealed in all His glory and God the Father sovereignly accomplishes all His purposes and becomes the focus of believers forever. Therefore, our premise at MBC is that we hasten the coming of the day of God by living holy lives (2 Pet 3:11-12) and cooperate with Him in accomplishing His purpose to save sinners and sanctify saints prior to the end.

Our Priorities

Our priorities describe the essential relationships that govern what and why we do what we do. These three pillars direct how we fulfill the God-given priorities of Maranatha Bible Church:

Upward – Exalting God

The Believer's Relationship With God – To love and worship the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, both individually and corporately.

- Psalm 96:7-9 ~ Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; Bring an offering and come into His courts. Worship the Lord in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth.
- Matthew 22:37 ~ 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Inward – Edifying Believers

The Believer's Relationship with Believers – To build up God's people to be more like Jesus Christ through loving encouragement and equipping in godly character, biblical understanding, and ministry skills.

- Ephesians 4:12 ~ for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
- 1 Thessalonians 5:11 ~ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.
- Hebrews 10:24 ~ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds

Outward – Evangelizing the Lost

The Believer's Relationship with the World – To help those without Christ become passionate worshippers of Christ by sharing the gospel of Christ and establishing churches locally and globally.

- Matthew 28:19-20 ~ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
- Acts 1:8 ~ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Our Passions

Our passions constitute the core values that give direction and focus to the ministry of Maranatha Bible Church and express the key convictions that drive us. The following 10 core values comprise those passions:

God-Centered Worship – We are committed to declaring God’s glory through worship which magnifies Him in our praise and manifests Him in our actions (John 4:23-24; Rom 12:1-2; Heb 13:15).

Biblical Authority – We are committed to God’s sufficient, authoritative Word in all matters of belief and behavior for our enjoyment of God and for the ministry of the church, including the verse by verse exposition of God’s Word as a means of bringing about spiritual transformation in the lives of His people (Ps 1:1-3; Ps 19:7-9; Ps 119; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12).

Sound Doctrine – We are committed to being a pillar and support of the truth by holding fast to sound doctrine as found in the Word of God (1 Tim 3:15; 1 Tim 6:3-4; Tit 1:9)

Prayerful Dependence – We are committed to prayer as the means by which we couple ourselves to God’s power for all our efforts in life and ministry (Acts 2:42; Eph 6:18-20; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:16-18).

Relational Roles – We are committed to husbands, wives, and children fulfilling their biblical roles in the family and in the church (Deut 6:4-9; Ps 78:1-9; Eph 5:22-6:4; 1 Tim 2:11-15).

Qualified Leadership – We are committed to the submission of Maranatha Bible Church to a plurality of qualified elders who lovingly serve and shepherd the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-3; Heb 13:17).

Active Ministry – We are committed to every believer faithfully serving in the body of Christ, using the gifts they have been given by the Holy Spirit for its edification (Rom 12:9-13; 1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 4:11-12).

Edifying Fellowship – We are committed to Christ-centered relationships by which we serve and build up fellow believers, especially through the regular gathering of small groups focused on God’s Word, prayer, and mutual love (John 13:34; Heb 10:24-25; Jam 5:16).

Purposeful Equipping – We are committed to helping each member of the body of Christ grow in biblical knowledge, godly character, and ministry skills (Eph 4:12; Col 1:28), including the intentional training of equippers and elders for the establishment and edification of the church (1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 2:2).

Evangelistic Outreach – We are committed to fulfilling Christ’s commission to make disciples of all the nations by proclaiming the Gospel and purposefully contributing to the establishment and growth of the church locally and globally (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Rom 10:14-17).

Our Purpose

Our purpose states, in a succinct and concise manner, the basic reason for which Maranatha Bible Church exists. Maranatha Bible Church Exists to:

Display God’s Glory...Declare God’s Truth...Delight in God’s Son...Disciple God’s People

