

## **Elders' Statement on Obedience, Truth and Grace**

### **July 28, 2015**

Southview Community Church believes strongly there is a biblical necessity of emphasizing both the truth of God's Word and the grace inherent in our relationship with God through Jesus. There is a tension between truth and grace, and that tension must be managed and not resolved, or else we will fall into a non-biblical position. If we focus on truth to the exclusion of grace, we will find ourselves in a legalism that is not biblical. If we focus on grace to the exclusion of truth, we will find ourselves in the place of relativism, where anyone may do anything that seems or feels right to them. That lack of orthodoxy and orthopraxy is not a biblical position. Our desire at Southview is to lead from and submit to a foundation of comprehensive biblical authority.

Jesus didn't water down the truth - and He didn't water down grace. He was full of both (John 1:14), and He is our model. We strive to boldly and clearly proclaim the truth of God's Word, and we strive to show God's grace in every relationship and interaction. We believe God's grace is only as visible as God's truth is clear.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is not supposed to stop at the point of salvation - that is the beginning. The apostles described new Christians as babies who must grow into maturity, a process called sanctification. It is a work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16) in which we participate through our obedience to become like Christ in everything (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:15, 1 John 2:6, 1 Peter 1:14-15). Obedience to God's Word is not optional for a follower of Jesus; it's a critical part of sanctification. Obedience does not affect our salvation - that is a work done by Christ alone. On this side of Heaven, we will always be saints and sinners (Romans 7:25-8:1). The Bible speaks to and is concerned with our obedience to the moral precepts of God - it is to this living a life that pleases God that the New Testament epistles speak most strongly (2 Corinthians 5:9, Colossians 1:10).

Hand in hand with our obedience, the Holy Spirit produces maturity in us that is described as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The characteristics and relational behaviors in this passage derive from the very nature of God, and are formed in us as we walk in obedience to God's Word.

We believe truth and grace are both essentials of the faith, and that to deny the full power of either is to deny biblical authority and the teachings of orthodox Christian faith and practice. We encourage all disciples of Christ to "press toward the mark" with obedience to God's Word and a striving toward a life of holiness and conformity to the image of Christ.