

What I share here was foundational to us when we started LSM.

The group that became known as LSM had not planned to start a church. Most of us were part of a local body where we were seeking to follow the Lord's direction. When we left that assembly it wasn't to start a church but just to meet together and worship the Lord. When we felt called to start a church we weren't sure what it looked like. We recognized the reality of numerous disagreements over non-essentials in the body of Christ but we knew Jesus had called us to unity. We chose not to join a denomination. It was if we were doing an experiment to see if we could focus on the cross, and seek to walk together in humility, even if we had differing opinions on what I refer to as secondary doctrines. **This doesn't mean they aren't important.** It does mean they are not important enough to cause us to ignore Jesus prayer for unity in Jn 17.

1 Essentials of the Christian Faith which should be agreed upon among all Christian churches: (list not all inclusive.)

- All Scripture is the inspired and authoritative word of God.
- There is One true God who created all and He exists as three persons in one divine being.
- Christ is fully God and fully man. He alone was sufficient and willing to make atonement for our sins. He died for our sins, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and will come again.
- All humans are born with a sin nature and are at enmity with God. They cannot save themselves but God reconciled them to Himself through the message of the cross.
- God will judge the living and the dead.
- Christ will rule and reign as Lord of Lords and King of Kings forever and ever.

2 Areas in which Bible Believing Christians have studied the Scriptures diligently and arrived at different views - I will refer to these as disputeables. *(List is not all inclusive)* These areas become the basis of denominations and often become where major focus is placed. Often this leads to a place of not even fellowshiping with those who don't agree with us on these matters.

- Views of how things unfold in the end times: when the rapture occurs, views of millennium
- Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer: Is the baptism with the Holy Spirit separate from salvation? if it is, what is the evidence of it? Various views on spiritual gifts.
- Salvation - all in this group would agree that redemption comes in Christ alone. However, some believe in predestination, some in complete freewill, some that salvation cannot be lost and others that it can.
- Church government: congregational led, pastor led, elder led, bishop led, etc.
- Worship styles.

3 This group would usually be grouped in with Christian churches because they do confess to many of the essentials of the faith. However, they often place reason as equal to, or even higher, than Scripture. They may also put the word of man, and/or experience above the truth of God's truth. (list not all inclusive)

- Thus they justify their view of marriage and sex verses God's view.
- Spiritual leaders may claim that God told them something and they act on it even though it contradicts Scripture.
- Spiritual leaders may claim they have God given authority which causes great harm to God's people.

John 17:20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; [21] that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, **that the world may believe that You sent Me.** [22] And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: [23] I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, **and that the world may know that You have sent Me,** and have loved them as You have loved Me.

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in 5 same judgment. [11] For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. [12] Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." [13] Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: [2] You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. [3] Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.