

## **We Believe in the Church** (*Various Texts*)

### ***EFCA Statement of Faith, Article 8***

*We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.*

### ***Saved for a Purpose***

- The heart of the Gospel is that Jesus came to save us
  - *From* sin & death
    - Justification: the change in a person's condition moving from a state of sin to a state of righteousness (Rom 5:1-2)
  - *For* a mission:
    - Sanctification: To be set apart for God's purpose and pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13)
    - Vocation: God's calling on the lives of disciples of Jesus to use their lives to build His kingdom (2 Thess. 1:11-12; see Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:9; 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:3, 10)

### ***The Great Commandment***

- The ultimate expression of this calling is found in the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39)
  - Supreme love for God
    - Heart, soul, mind & strength: Every aspect of a human being
  - Sacrificial love for those around us (John 15:12-14)

### ***Living It Out***

- How we live declares the Gospel, either poorly or rightly (Luke 6:43-44)
  - "Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words." –Francis of Assisi
- We live this mission out in various ways:
  - Care for one another (Gal. 6:2; see Rom. 12:10; 14:13; 15:7, 14; Gal. 5:26; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:11, 15; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:9)
  - Compassion toward the poor (Pro. 31:8-9; see Dt. 15:11; Psa. 82:3,4; Psa. 140:12; Prov. 14:21,31; 19:17; 22:9,16,22,23; 28:8; 29:7; Jer. 22:16; Gal. 2:10; Js. 1:27; 2:15-16)
  - Justice for the oppressed (Ps 82:3-4)
    - This was part of Jesus' mission that He has entrusted to us (Luke 4:18-19; see Isa. 61:1-2)

### ***So What?***

- Are we living out our calling as the Church?
- Do we love God supremely & others sacrificially?

***Meditation Verse: 1 Peter 2:9***