

Title: “OIC Statement of Faith, Part 5: We believe that man is a sinner in need of salvation”

Key verse: Romans 5:15-19 (NASB) – “But the gracious gift is not like the offense. For if by the offense of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many. <sup>16</sup> The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *offense*, resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the gracious gift *arose* from many offenses, resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> So then, as through one offense the result was condemnation to all mankind, so also through one act of righteousness the result was justification of life to all mankind. <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

Good morning, everyone. It is good to see you all again. This morning, I am continuing with my sermon series on the doctrines outlined in the Statement of Faith of Osaka International Church. Two months ago, I covered Paragraph 4 of our Statement of Faith, which was about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives – and then last month I did two follow-up messages continuing on the theme of the Holy Spirit. Today, I am going to move on to Paragraph 5. But before that, I would like to spend a few minutes sharing with you my motivation for doing this series of doctrinal sermons.

As you know, I have described Osaka International Church as an interdenominational church which stands in the evangelical and Protestant tradition. Last year as I was reflecting on our church and on the many years of my involvement here, three thoughts came to my mind of what would characterize the ideal church – these aren’t the only characteristics, but these are important ones which came to my mind last year. First of all, such a church would be a loving church. Second, it would be a sanctified church. Third, it would be a literate place, knowledgeable of the Scriptures. Indeed, over the years, I have seen OIC be a loving and welcoming place. And a sanctified church, standing on the Word of God and dedicated to living by its precepts. And a literate church, knowledgeable of Scripture. I am glad over the years that we have had pastors who have taught through whole books of the Bible in expositional sermons, and a Wednesday night Bible Study where the Scripture is taught in depth. It is this desire I have to see us be a church well-schooled in the Scriptures that has inspired me to do this series of messages on the main doctrines of the Christian faith as outlined in our church’s Statement of Faith. To remind all of us that these are the fundamental doctrines that we must stand on. This is our foundation, the historic Christian faith as taught in the Scriptures and as enumerated by the ancient church fathers and by Protestant reformers as they studied the Biblical material and distilled for us the essential doctrines, such as the doctrines of the Triune God, the divinity of Christ, the nature of mankind, and the way of salvation.

Today, I come to Paragraph 5 of the OIC Statement of Faith. As with previous sermons in this series, the title of my sermon is a kind of summary of the whole paragraph I am covering. The title of today’s sermon is “We believe that man is a sinner in need of salvation.” Every human being is a sinner. And everyone is in need of salvation. Many of us have already taken that step of putting our faith in Christ and receiving salvation. And some of you who are listening today have not yet put your faith in Christ, and I am glad that you are here with us today in a place where you can hear the message of the gospel and the way of salvation.

Although I will be focusing on Paragraph 5 of our Statement of Faith, I would like to begin by reading once more Paragraphs 1 to 4. Here they are:

Paragraph 1:

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life. II Timothy 3:16.

Paragraph 2:

We believe in one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2.

Paragraph 3:

We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a perfect and complete sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the majesty on high, He is now our High Priest and Advocate. Luke 1:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 8:1-2.

Paragraph 4:

We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men of sin, regenerate the sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service. John 16:7-14.

Next, let us read Paragraph 5 of our Statement of Faith, the focus of today's message:

We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained. Romans 5:15-19, Romans 8:15-17.

Please note some of the key concepts presented in this paragraph:

Mankind was created in the image of God

Mankind fell into sin

Mankind is lost

Only through regeneration can salvation and the spiritual life be obtained

These four key concepts will be the outline of today's sermon.

Let's begin with Part 1: Mankind was created in the image of God.

In the first chapter of the Bible, we read about the creation of the world ... the creation of the heavens and the earth. God brought light into existence, and He separated the light from the darkness. Then He formed the earth, the sky, the seas, the land, and the plant-life. Then He created the sun, moon, and stars. Then sea creatures and flying creatures and land animals. Finally, at the culmination of His creation, God created mankind.

Let's read Genesis 1:26-28 (NKJV) – "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image;  
in the image of God He created him;  
male and female He created them.

<sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Looking again at verse 26, let me note something about God. He said “Let Us make man ...” The word “God” here is *’ēlō-hîm*, and it is a plural noun, though it is often used with pronouns that are singular, such as “he” and “him.” Traditionally, most commentators have seen this as the Scripture’s first indication of the Trinity. God is talking to Himself: “Let Us make...” There are multiple members in the Godhead.

Let me note a few more things in this passage. God is in relationship with the other persons of the Trinity. And when He creates this earth, He gives mankind the authority to exercise dominion over it. One aspect of being made in the “image of God” is this ability to have relationships with others, and another aspect is that God has given mankind dominion over the creation. But there is more to the image of God than these two ideas.

Let me read some notes from my ESV Study Bible. At Genesis 1:26-27, my Study Bible says this:

Traditionally, the image [of God] has been seen as the capacities that set man apart from the other animals—ways in which humans resemble God, such as in the characteristics of reason, morality, language, a capacity for relationships governed by love and commitment, and creativity in all forms of art. All these insights can be put together by observing that the resemblances (man is like God in a series of ways) allow mankind to represent God in ruling, and to establish worthy relationships with God, with one another, and with the rest of the creation. This “image” and this dignity apply to *both* “male and female” human beings. (This view is unique in the context of the ancient Near East...)

At this stage, humanity as a species is set apart from all other creatures and crowned with glory and honor as ruler of the earth (cf. Ps. 8:5–8).

Being made in the image of God means that we share some of God’s characteristics, such as reason, morality, and language. We are quite distinct from the animals. Thus, every human being has worth, has dignity. The image of God is shared by both male and female – they have equal dignity and value. Both are representatives of God, and both share in the mandate to have dominion over the earth. God created this world, and has made men and women His vice-regents to exercise stewardship over the creation. We not only use the resources of the earth ... we also take care of this earth.

Let me quote some additional material from the ESV Study Bible’s outline of biblical doctrine. It says this:

While humans are the pinnacle of creation, to say we are *like* God also means that we are not and will never *be* God. We have great dignity because we are made in God’s image, but our worth is not autonomous. God is the source of all human value.

The fall and curse of humanity distorts the image of God in man but does not remove it from him. After the fall, the image of God remains the basis for human dignity and biblical ethics (Gen. 9:6; James 3:8–9)... The foundation of Christian ethics is the assumption that *all* humans are made in God’s image regardless of the presence or absence of certain abilities. From conception to death all human beings are God’s image-bearers, and all are creatures of profound dignity and value, equally worthy of protection and respect. ...

There is more I could say on this topic, but I would like to move on to the next part of today's message – Part 2: Mankind fell into sin.

You know the story of the serpent in Genesis chapter 3 and the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. The serpent is identified elsewhere as the devil, called Satan. Before I read the passage in Genesis, I would like to read a comment that Jesus Christ made. While He was having a confrontation with the religious leaders in the temple, Jesus said this to them ...

John 8:44 (NASB) – “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Those religious leaders were more interested in their position than in honoring God or following the truth. They had been claiming that their father was Abraham, but Jesus said: That's not right, your father is actually the devil. The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and a liar. His lying words in Genesis chapter 3 are what led to the fall of mankind into sin and death.

Let's read Genesis 3:1 (NASB) – “Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?””

Notice that the first tactic the devil uses is to have us question God. Did God really say that? Does God really care for your welfare? The devil gets us to doubt God.

And then the woman replies to the serpent. Hmm. I think that it is not a good idea to engage in a conversation with evil, but that's what the woman does. And that leads to all kinds of trouble.

Let's continue reading: verses 2-4 – “The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’” <sup>4</sup> The serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die!”

Here the devil directly contradicts God. God had given a commandment to Adam in Genesis 2:17 (NASB) – “But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.” Actually, physical death didn't come immediately when Adam and Eve broke this law, but that became the end result – they will die physically one day. What Adam and Eve experienced in the short term when they broke this law was spiritual death.

Let's continue the story in Genesis 3 ... verses 4-7 (NASB) – “The serpent said to the woman, “You certainly will not die! <sup>5</sup> For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves waist coverings.”

The woman was tempted, since she saw the fruit as desirable in multiple ways. She broke the law, and offered the fruit to her husband as well and he also ate. I find it remarkable that verse 6 says the man was with her – Adam must have been aware of the conversation between his wife and the serpent, and yet he did not seek to prevent what was happening. The husband is the head of the household and has the responsibility to stop bad things from happening, but Adam failed in his duty. In fact, he joined his wife in breaking the law.

And what is the immediate result? They saw they were naked and they sought to cover themselves up. The innocence and intimacy they once enjoyed was now marred, and they distance themselves from each other by covering up. The only two human beings are now alienated from each other, and that continues with all human beings throughout history. Indeed, in the following verses in Genesis 3, we read that Adam and Eve have also become alienated from their Creator as well, for they also try to hide from God (that's in verses 9 and 10).

This episode is called the Fall of Man. Mankind as a whole has fallen into sin. We now suffer the consequences of the fall, including broken relationships, difficulty, disease and death. In the Bible's words, we are sinners and we are lost.

Part 3: Mankind is lost ... and in need of salvation.

Isaiah 59:2 (NASB) says – “But your iniquities have caused a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

Romans 3:23 (NASB) – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” All of us have sinned. We all feel separation from our Creator.

Romans 3:10-12 (NASB) quotes the opening lines of Psalm 14 – “As it is written: “There is none righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is none who does good, there is not even one”.”

We all know from personal experience this feeling of separation from God. We do have a sense of right and wrong, and yet we so often choose the wrong. Many of us identify with the Apostle Paul when he says in Romans 7:18-19 (NIV) – “For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

But the good news of the Gospel is that God has provided a solution to this sin problem. He has sent Jesus Christ into the world.

Luke 19:10 (NIV) – “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

In Matthew chapter 1 verse 21, an angel makes this statement to Joseph, telling him what will happen through Mary and giving a command: “She will give birth to a Son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” The name “Jesus” means “Jehovah saves,” and we are told here that Jesus will save His people from their sins. This salvation is offered to you and to me.

It is through Christ's sacrifice on the cross that our sins are paid for and we are saved. Romans 5:8-10 (NASB) – "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. <sup>10</sup> For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that we are saved. And this is appropriated through faith.

John 3:16 (NKJV) – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Paragraph 5 of the OIC Statement of Faith references Romans 5:15-19. The time has come for us to read that passage. In the second half of Romans 5, Paul is contrasting two persons and the results of these two persons' actions. The first person is Adam, whose sin and disobedience brought death to mankind. The second person is Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice on the cross purchased redemption (salvation) for whoever will put their faith in Him.

Let's read verses 15-19 (NASB) – "But the gracious gift is not like the offense. For if by the offense of the one [Adam] the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many. <sup>16</sup> The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one offense, resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the gracious gift arose from many offenses, resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> So then, as through one offense the result was condemnation to all mankind, so also through one act of righteousness the result was justification of life to all mankind. <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

Verse 18 again: through the offense of Adam, condemnation came to all mankind. But through Christ's act of righteousness on the cross, justification is made available to all who put their faith in Him.

The words of the great hymn "Amazing Grace" come to my mind. The hymn was written by John Newton in the 18th century. Newton had once been involved in the slave trade, but he experienced God's gracious forgiveness and became a pastor in the Church of England. Here are his words:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.

Let us move on now to the last part of today's message.

Part 4: Only through regeneration can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

Titus 3:4-5 (NASB) – “ But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup> He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

Salvation is not accomplished by our deeds – rather, it is by God’s mercy. God is the initiator of salvation. And here in this passage we see the word “regeneration.” Re-generation – to generate once more; to make alive once more. It says here that God saves us “by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.” This regeneration and renewing is described as a washing. This would refer to the washing away of our sins, the washing away of our guilt, and being made clean. We are cleansed and we are made alive once more. And this is done by the Holy Spirit.

This was promised in the Old Testament. Two months ago, I shared with you the promise found in Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NASB). The words were originally spoken to disobedient Israel, but after the coming of the Messiah, we Gentiles have been included in the invitation to follow Jesus. Let’s read the promise recorded by Ezekiel where God says this – “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put My Spirit within you and bring it about that you walk in My statutes, and are careful and follow My ordinances.”

This is regeneration: we are cleansed from our sins and our old, stubborn hearts are replaced by a new heart and we are now indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

In John chapter 3, Nicodemus visits Jesus at night and Jesus says to him in verse 3, “Jesus responded and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

It is from this verse that we get the language of “born again.” Actually, the original Greek phrase here literally means “born from above.” To be born again is to be born from above.

Nicodemus is puzzled, because when Jesus says “born again,” Nicodemus is thinking of physical birth. Let’s read verses 4-8 (NASB) – Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a person be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born, can he?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born of water and *the* Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it is coming from and where it is going; so is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.”

Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, the renewal of a person’s inner being – his or her heart.

Have you been born again? Have you experienced forgiveness of your sins and a restored relationship with your Creator? This is God’s free gift to you, His grace to you. To accept this gift, one must turn away from sin and toward God, putting one’s faith in Christ.

1st John 1:9 (NASB) – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

In Acts 16, a Gentile asks about the way of salvation and Paul and Silas respond to him. Verses 30-31 (NASB) say this – “And after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.* This message is for everyone – you and your family and anyone else.

Confess your sins, turn away from them, put your faith in Christ, and you will receive forgiveness and salvation. If you have not done so, you can do so today. After the worship service, talk to one of the workers at our church ... or at the back of the auditorium you see a sign which says “Lift” and there you can meet with a worker to pray with and to ask any question pertaining to the Christian life, including the way of salvation.

I will close today’s message with one of the verses I memorized back in my college days and which is special to me. 2nd Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” This is the new birth: old things have passed away; everything has become new; we have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are now a new creation.