Breath of Grace
PUBLISHING

Isolation is not healing.

BEFORE YOU VISIT OR JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH

The One Question *You Must Ask*

“How does this church teach how a person is made right with God?”

A church may say many true things about Jesus and salvation and still leave the gospel unclear in practice. Pay attention not only to what is stated, but also to what is emphasized, what is left unsaid, and how struggling people are treated.

A CLEAR GOSPEL ANSWER

“We are made right with God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works, performance, religious effort, or our ability to keep the law.”

Salvation is God’s gift, secured by Christ’s finished work, and received by faith.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
Ephesians 2:8–9 NKJV

A VAGUE ANSWER MAY SOUND LIKE

“We believe Jesus is Lord, the Bible is true, and the Holy Spirit is moving in power. We are committed to holiness, prayer, worship, and building a strong community of believers.”

Those things may be true, but they do not clearly answer how a person is made right with God.

WHEN YOU VISIT

Listen for

Grace through faith in Christ alone. Salvation is described as a gift, not something we earn.

Christ's finished work. The focus is on what Jesus has already done on our behalf, not on how well we perform.

Identity in Christ. Believers are taught who they are in Him: forgiven, accepted, and loved as God's children.

Obedience that flows from grace. Holiness is taught as our response to God's love and acceptance.

Compassion for people who struggle. Those who fall are restored, not shamed.

Rest, not striving. Believers are invited to rest in God's love instead of working to keep it.

Notice if

There is no clear gospel. The website, sermons, or classes never plainly explain how a person is made right with God.

The vision is louder than the gospel. Strong emphasis on the five-fold ministry, "taking the city," or prosperity, but no plain explanation of the gospel.

A formula replaces the gospel. Salvation is tied to required steps, such as a specific baptism or speaking in tongues, rather than grace through faith in Christ.

Grace is in name only. "Grace" appears in the name or vocabulary, but grace is not reflected in the teaching.

Fear is used to motivate. People are kept anxious about losing God's love or falling out of His favor.

Worth is measured by what others can see. People are valued for their titles, platform, connections, political affiliation, appearance, wealth, or how much they give or serve.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE ANSWER

- ☐ **Online:** The "What We Believe" page and posted sermons
- ☐ **In Person:** What is emphasized from the pulpit and in the pews
- ☐ **In Class:** What a new members' class requires or expects
- ☐ **In Practice:** How leaders talk about people who struggle or fall

IF YOU NEED TO POLITELY STEP AWAY

> *Thank you for your hospitality. I've been prayerfully considering whether this is the right church for me, and I don't believe it is at this time. I appreciate the warmth I've experienced here, and I'll continue praying for the church.*

You do not need to debate, defend, or prove. You can simply walk forward.

A clear understanding of the gospel is your greatest protection.

Know the gospel of Jesus Christ well enough to recognize when a church's teaching or practice drifts from it.

Breath of Grace Publishing

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SCAN TO WATCH THE MESSAGE