

Being A Christian Class 2

Believing in Christ *The Creed*

The Apostle's Creed: *Statement of Faith*

Background: *Though not written by the original apostles, the creed first emerged as a statement of the Christian faith in the 2nd century. It expanded upon the creed "Jesus is Lord" (Rom. 10:9) and formed the basis of instruction for converts who would then say it as a profession of faith at their baptism. The creed still serves three main purposes: 1) provides a brief summary of the Christian faith 2) allows recognition and avoidance of incomplete versions of Christianity 3) emphasizes that to believe is to belong. The creed is Trinitarian in form and contains three articles: creation, redemption, and sanctification.*

I BELIEVE IN...

What do we mean when we say "I Believe"?

GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

What do we mean when we say that God is our Almighty Father?

What are some other images used to describe God? Do you find them helpful?

CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

We are here because God chose to create each one of us. What do you think it means to be created in His likeness?

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD

What is significant about Jesus being the Christ and God's only Son?

HE WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY

What mystery do we profess in this phrase of the creed?

Why do you think this mystery is essential to Jesus' work on the cross?

**HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED.
HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD.**

What do you think is significant about the creed mentioning Pontius Pilate?

Why do you think the creed only mentions the way Jesus died and says nothing about how He lived or what He taught?

What comfort can we find in knowing that Jesus suffered?

ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN.

Would you still be a Christian if this phrase were not true?

**HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN AND IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.
HE WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.**

Currently where is Jesus and what is He doing?

As Christians should we be troubled about being judged by Jesus?

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT...

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our lives as Christians?

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN

What does this concluding phrase tell us about the Church's priorities?

Who all is included in "the communion of saints"?

How does this concluding phrase remind us that we can always rejoice, no matter our circumstances?

"The core of the Christian faith is a person, not a set of abstract ideas or beliefs"

Faith is like an anchor, linking us with the object of faith. Just as an anchor secures a ship to the ocean floor, so our faith links us securely with God. Faith is not just believing God exists; it is about anchoring ourselves to that God and resting secure in doing so. Whatever storms life may bring, the anchor of faith will hold us firm to God.
Alister McGrath

Faith is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor towards us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. ~ John Calvin

Week 2 Review - Believing in Christ

- God has revealed Himself through creation (Rom. 1.19-20) and our conscience (Rom. 2.15), yet we cannot fully know Him, nor enter into a personal saving relationship with Him, apart from Jesus as revealed in Scripture (Heb. 1.1-3).
- To have faith is to affirm something is true, to place trust in and make a commitment to live by that truth. Jesus is the truth (John 14.6) and faith in Him is a gift that leads to a life of service (Eph. 2.8-10).
- God transcends what we can comprehend, but He graciously provides us with images we can relate to such as Shepherd, King, and Father that show us how much He cares for us (Matt. 7.9-11). God is all-powerful, can do more than we can imagine, and is trustworthy (2 Tim. 2.11-13), in all these ways He is Almighty.
- We are here because God created us and sustains us through His Word (Gen. 1.3; Heb. 1.3). We are created in God's likeness in order to be in a relationship with Him; we belong to Him (Gen. 1.26-7; 1 Cor. 6.19-20).
- The phrase "Jesus Christ...Son of God...our Lord" declares what we are to believe about Him. That He is equal with God the Father (John 5.16-27), fulfills the OT promises of a Savior (Matt. 1.21-23), and is the rightful ruler of human hearts (Phil. 2.9-11).
- Jesus' divine conception and human birth are essential for our salvation (Luke 1.26-38). Being fully human Jesus fulfilled the Law in our place while also taking the punishment we deserved through our sin. Being fully divine His life was the ransom that overcame death and the devil, bringing those who trust in Him back into a right relationship with the Father (1 Tim. 2.5; 2 Cor. 5.18-19).
- The creed is rooted in history by reminding us that Jesus suffered at the hands of the political and religious leaders of the time (Luke 3.1-3; Acts 2.22-3). And yet the historical fact of Jesus' death is only Good News when it is linked to the resurrection and seen as the atonement for our sins (Rom. 4.25).
- Jesus' suffering and death provide us with comfort because He can identify with our struggles (Heb. 4.16). God's love is firmly established and shown in Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom. 5.8), and it is in and through this act of love that our new life and baptism are rooted (Rom. 6.1-11).
- Through His resurrection, Jesus made Himself available to all by breaking down the barriers of time and space (Matt. 27.51). He is presently with the Father actively interceding on our behalf (Rom. 8:33-34) until He comes again in great power to judge (John 3:18-19). As Christians we have already been judged in Jesus and found righteous (Rom. 5.1-2).
- The Holy Spirit makes salvation real, applying Christ's redemptive work to sinners. Thus the Spirit brings life, both physical and spiritual (John 3.5-6). He keeps us mindful of our sin, is our inheritance, and counselor (John 16.8-13; Ep. 1.13-14; John 14.26-7, 15.26). Fruit, gifts, and true prayer come through Him. (Gal. 5.22; 1 Cor. 12.4-11; Rom. 8.26-7; Luke 11.13)
- Christ's body, the universal church, is set apart to be used by God as it follows the teaching entrusted to the apostles (Acts 2:42). It is a fellowship of those who are holy by calling and not nature, being set apart to remind people of Jesus (Luke 22:19). The church's identity is rooted in the forgiveness of sins through the work of the cross (Matt. 27:51) and its living hope is to live with God eternally in the resurrection (Rom. 8:17; John 10:10).

Theological Terms in Simple Language:

Trinity: God is one, existing in three persons (tri-unity). To fully comprehend this truth we need another dimension, yet we can experience it as God's divine dance of love.

Heaven: The realm in which God's will is perfectly done. In Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven has broken into space and time on earth, and we're given a foretaste.

Incarnation: God entering into his creation and becoming man in Jesus. He was fully God, born of the Holy Spirit, and fully human, born of the Virgin Mary.

Redemption: To buy back something that has been lost. Jesus has bought us back for God through the cross.

Atonement: At-one-ment - through the work of Jesus on the cross we have been brought back into a right relationship with God.

Ascension: Jesus' return to his rightful place with the Father in heaven.

Eschatology: Study of the end times, including God's judgment of all creation at which time humanity will be separated into those who believed God loved them and those who rejected his love. The earth will be remade and eternally bound to the fullness of heaven.

Universal Church: The body of Christ, the household of God, made up of Christians - all people who have placed their hope and trust in Jesus alone and seek to follow him. This gathering transcends denominations.

Communion of Saints: All Christians throughout the ages - both currently in heaven and on earth.

Forgiveness: The canceling of a debt. The one offering forgiveness absorbs the cost of the debt him or her self. Jesus on the cross absorbed our debt so that we could live by the riches of his perfect life of love.

Resurrection: The raising of the dead to eternal, unending life within a new body, earth, and the fullness of heaven. The resurrection began in Jesus after he physically rose from the tomb, declaring God's victory over sin, death, and the devil. The resurrection vindicated and validated Jesus' ministry

Suggestions for Next Week:

Christian Basics: A Handbook of Christian Faith by John Stott

Chapters 4-6

To Be A Christian: An Anglican Catechism at www.anglicanchurch.net in Resources Section: *Believing in Christ*

Review notes looking up Scripture passages.

Read over the Apostle's or Nicene Creed. Try memorizing one of them.

Pray that God will help you know, love, and enjoy Him more during the week.