

**Vid bumper Creed

Redemption Church is a nondenominational Church. We are a growing group of people from a bunch of different denominational backgrounds. Let's name some... Lutheran, Church of Christ, Messianic, Catholic, Pentecostal, Greek Orthodox, Charismatic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist...

We don't gather under the banner of a denomination, but we gather under the banner of Christ.

We aren't trying to form a new denomination, but we are trying to expand God's Kingdom! We want to tell the world about Jesus Christ.

Is that a vision you can get behind today?

Being around each other from different denominational backgrounds has been a real positive for us as a church.

- Leads us to question why and how we serve the Lord. Where before we might have just taken our denominations word for it, now we look into the Word of God ourselves to find the answers.
- Removed our religious prejudice.
- Reminds us that although there is one way to heaven – Jesus Christ, there are many paths that we have all taken in coming to Christ. No denomination has a monopoly on coming to Jesus.

Today we are kicking off a series that is either going to make you feel weird or right at home. You will either be really worried about me or say “finally you are speaking my language!”

We are going to be using the Apostles' Creed over the next few weeks. You may be saying “what is that!?” You might be very familiar with it and grew up reciting it in your liturgical worship services. You might be opposed to anything with the word creed in it and say “Let's just stick with the Word of God.”

Right here at the beginning of the series I want to explain what the creed is and why this study will benefit us.

Let's define **Creed**. A formal statement of Christian beliefs. A set of beliefs or aims that guide someone's actions.

There are many Christians who have never really organized their beliefs. You need to have your Faith organized. You need to KNOW what you believe.

- You need to know so that NO ONE WILL DECEIVE YOU. The Bible warns us of false teachers looking people to deceive.

Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.(NIV)

- You need to know so that YOU CAN SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH OTHERS! (1 Peter 3:15)

Believers have used the Apostles Creed for that purpose for over a millennia.

THIS IS IMPORTANT SO LISTEN. **WE DON'T PREACH THE CREED**

The words of the Creed are not meant to replace the Word of God. Authority is found in the Word of God – Not in a creed, a statement of faith, or a denominational tradition.

A good creed is meant to reflect scripture – not replace it.

Dallas pastor Matt Chandler had a great illustration for this. The moon has no light of its own... it reflects the light of the sun. It points out in the night sky that there is a light source.

The moon is not the light source... Creeds, spiritual books on faith, inspirational devotions, prayer books, worship music lyrics are not the light source... BUT THEY POINT US TO THE LIGHT SOURCE – THE WORD OF GOD/JESUS CHRIST!

I am not preaching the creed today but using it to point us to the real authority.

Creeds Connect

The Apostles' Creed will also help us connect to other Christians throughout history. WE ARE NOT THE FIRST TO BELIEVE IN

CHRIST. The Body of Christ spreads across national borders & denominations, but it also spreads across time boundaries.

This Creed was read by real people who, LIKE US, were trying to live for Jesus through difficulties, trials, temptations, persecution, and faith questions CENTURIES AGO. As we look at it we feel that connection and realize that this faith existed long before it found us.

The Apostles' Creed is the oldest of the written Christian creeds. It has been used in 2 main ways..

1. To correct error. Over history there have been instances of believers drifting into things that are not true. The Creed helped anchor believers to true Bible teaching points.
2. To teach and shape faith in believers.

The common view of historians is that Apostles' creed was formulated in the 1st or 2nd century. It is mentioned in found letters from the 3rd century.

Here is how the Apostles' creed is NOT supposed to be used. By memorizing and reciting the creed you DO NOT become a Christian. It is not a magic phrase that gains you admittance into heaven.

You become a Christian through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

I am going to read the Apostles' Creed. I am not going to ask you to stand. In fact I would like to ask you not to read aloud with me, but to listen and contemplate if you can agree with what you hear.

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic* church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

*All embracing, Universal

It is ok if you don't know if you agree with everything in the Creed. Some of it will need some explaining.

I want to tell you that there are essential Christian beliefs within this Creed. Over the next weeks we are going to look at these essential Christian beliefs.

Today we are going to start with

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

This statement is ESSENTIAL to the Cristian Faith. I have 3 points to share with you about

We need a faith that is SPECIFIC

I believe in God. This is a powerful statement.

To my knowledge no one has ever been killed, tortured, or persecuted for a belief in A GOD. But more than we can count have been martyred for belief in a SPECIFIC GOD.

To be a Christian you must go farther in your belief than simply believing in a general idea of God. You must go further than believing in multiple Gods. You need a SPECIFIC faith.

I believe in God... the God who is the Almighty Father... The God who is creator of heaven & earth.

He is an ALMIGHTY GOD. There is no one greater than Him.

Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.(NIV)

The Greatest command according to Jesus (Luke 10:27) is the SHEMA. We studied that a few years ago. The Word SHEMA means "Hear" and is the first word in the verse... Let's look at the SHEMA – the greatest command.

Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.(NIV)

Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.(NIV)

If Israel was going to follow God they would need a Specific Faith. And so do we!

There is ONE GOD. I know that there are other religions in every direction telling you about a different God, BUT YOU NEED TO BELIEVE ONLY IN THIS SPECIFIC GOD.

We love this God. We honor this God. We worship this God with all our heart mind strength soul. We can't worship any other God.. Because we have given this Specific God ALL OUR HEART.

You need to know your Bible so that you can know this God.

You need to know Jesus. You need to know more than general concepts about Him.

The more you learn about God the more specific He becomes.

John P TESTIMONY

We need specific faith and prayer

Pray to this Specific God and ask Him to do Specific miracles.

We need a faith that is PERSONAL

We need to do more than just narrow down from general to Specific. We need to do more than just narrow down the list of possible Gods to the one true God.

This God is Father.

Of all the attributes used to describe to God.. this one is deeply personal.

The word Father carries many meanings.. for example James Naismith is known as the "Father" of basketball. He invented it more than 100 years ago. The old testament patriarch Abraham is called the father of the faithful (Romans 4:16) because the promises of eternal life through faith originated with him.

In the family construct there is a father. You can't have a baby without a father & a mother. So Father can be a biological term.

There are many religions that claim God to be an inventor, creator, biological father of creation. Christianity claims this but it goes much further. It becomes a personal faith.

This may be difficult to view God as a personal father. Perhaps you never knew your father, or perhaps you knew your father as an abusive figure. God wants to be the father you never had. God wants to set the standard of what a good father is, and He wants to be that good father to you.

Jesus often referred to the Father. He did this more than anyone in scripture. Jesus' referral of God as father goes beyond creator and it goes beyond biology.

Mark 14:36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."(NIV)

Abba is an Aramaic term for "Daddy." It is a personal term for Father.

Mother & Father are formal terms. Children often use their own terms like mommy, mom, dad, or dada, papa...

Jesus shows us that THE FATHER is not just a creator or biological source. He is a personal daddy.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."(NIV)

Not slaves & servants.. but SONS! Personal

Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."(NIV)

You don't just know of God.. You KNOW HIM. You have heard Him. You have felt His presence. He has placed His Spirit within you. You cry out to him ABBA FATHER.

The more you learn about God the more personal He becomes.

The Christian Faith needs a Specific Faith, and a Personal Faith.

We need a faith that is TRANSFORMATIVE

This belief is powerful! The more you operate in this belief in the Almighty God, the more you will see the power in your life.

We are not simply talking about a belief system that you adopt... That doesn't necessarily change anything. We are talking about a belief that can change your life and the world around you.

The same word of God that created the world out of nothing can work inside of you!

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.(NIV)

No this important. I want you to understand.

We have faith in someone so powerful that they can create the world. We have faith in someone powerful.

BUT DO YOU KNOW that your TRANSFORMATIVE FAITH allows God's power to work in your life.

We don't just collect a new belief... the same power that created the world is working in you!

By Faith we understand the world was created by THE WORD...

Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:(NIV)

The disciples believed in this Specific Personal God and they CHANGED THE WORLD.

The more you learn about God the more transformative He becomes.

Do you have this faith?