

Core: Establishing Essentials of Faith
Session #1: This is Our God (The Nature of God)
September 8, 2021

OVERVIEW

Establishing essentials of faith
Historic, credal, Christian faith
“Orthodox” (“right doctrine”)
A Biblical basis for faith
Faith & worldview
This is whole-life faith

The Nicene Creed (325)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
The only Son of God,
The only begotten Son of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one essence with the Father.
By Whom all things were made,
and without Him was not anything in heaven or Earth made.
Who for humankind and for our salvation came down from heaven.
Was made human and was Incarnate from the Holy Spirit and from the Virgin Mary.
Was crucified For our sake in the days of Pontius Pilate;
suffered, died and was buried.
He rose from the dead on the third day as is written in the holy Scriptures;
ascended in glory into heaven,
sits at the right hand of his Father,
and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the life-giving God,
Who proceeded from the Father and the Son.
We worship and glorify Him with the Father and the Son.
Who spoke through the Prophets.

We believe in one, holy, catholic (universal), apostolic Church.
We believe in one baptism for the remission of sins.
We wait for the resurrection of the dead, and the life to come, world without end.
Amen.

A helpful word: “Mystery”

1 Timothy 3:16 *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

The foolishness of faith

1 Corinthians 1:18 *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

The hiddenness of faith

Matthew 11:25–26 *At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.*

A revealed faith

Matthew 11:27 *“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*

God’s understanding

Luke 24:45 *Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*

Speaking of mysteries: How many is God?

Monotheism: A one-God faith.

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Polytheism (many gods), atheism (no god), agnosticism (unknowable), materialism (nothing but matter)
Judaism, Islam, Christianity (includes Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant) are monotheistic (Abrahamic)
Not Hinduism (polytheistic), Shinto (Japan), Daoism (China), Sikh (India)

Father, Son, Holy Spirit

A purely Christian doctrine

The Trinity

In Creation

Genesis 1:1–3 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.*

At the Birth of Christ

Luke 1:35 *The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

At the Baptism of Christ

Matthew 3:16–17 *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

In the Ministry of Christ

Luke 10:21 *At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.*

The Promise of Christ

John 14:16–17 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

Christ’s Great Commission

Matthew 28:18–19 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

The Crucifixion of Christ

Luke 23:46 *Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.*

The Resurrection of Christ

Romans 1:4 *Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The Gift at Pentecost

Acts 1:4–5 *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

Trinity "Formula"

2 Corinthians 13:14 *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Our Identity in Christ

2 Corinthians 1:21–22 *Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

Members of the Trinity

A. The Attributes of God the Father

Communicable (humans share these traits) See 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Galatians 5:22-23, etc.

Love
Just
Truth
Merciful
Gracious
Faithful
Patient
Kind
Good
Gentle

Incommunicable (only God has these traits)

Holy (perfect & incorruptible, defines morality, purity, blameless, impeccable—unable to sin, veracity—cannot lie, etc.)

1 Peter 1:16¹⁶ *for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

Eternal (timeless, without origin, without beginning or end, uncreated, self-existent, self-sufficient, incomprehensible)

Psalms 102:12¹² *But you, O Lord, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations.*

Infinite (limitless, has to do with dimension, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient)

1 Kings 8:27 *"The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain You, O God.*

Immanent & Transcendent (in the world and other-worldly, involved)

Philippians 2:5–11 *“Let your attitude be the same as that of Jesus Christ: Who, being in very nature God, did not cling to His equality with God, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And having become human, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow,*

Immutability (unchanging, never changes/cannot be changed, constancy, impassible—isn't changed by suffering)

Malachi 3:6 *“I the Lord do not change; therefore you are not consumed.”*

Sovereignty (in control, unpreventable, does as He pleases, subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent)

Psalm 103:19 *The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.*

Because of the Trinity, these are shared with all the members of the God-head

B. The Deity of Christ**One with God**

John 10:30 *I and the Father are one.”*

Incarnate

Galatians 4:4–5 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

Son of God

Luke 1:35 *The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

Son of Man

Mark 8:31 *He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.*

Savior

1 John 4:14 *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*

Christ

Acts 2:36 *“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

Lord

Romans 10:9 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

King

1 Timothy 6:14–16 *to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶ who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.*

C. The Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, God's Spirit, Spirit of Christ, etc.

Paraclete, advocate, teacher, counselor, helper

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

God's promise, the cross's provision, the gift at Pentecost

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Hebrew: "Ruach" (breath of God)

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Greek: "Pnuma"

John 3:8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

"Giver of life"

John 6:63 The Holy Spirit gives life.

"God is Spirit"

John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

"Born of the Spirit"

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

"Fruit of the Spirit"

Galatians 5:22–23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

"Gifts of the Spirit" (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4)

What's it all mean?

What if this is all true? What if this is really our God?

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome the wicked one, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Romans 8:35 Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Luke 1:37 For nothing is impossible with God."

Reflections for this week:

- **What challenges you Biblically?** (How do you understand Scripture differently?)
- **What challenges you ethically?** (How does this inform your morals and worldview?)
- **What challenges you personally?** (What might God be speaking to your heart about your personal life?)