

The Apostles Creed: Week 2

“...and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord...”

Today’s snippet of the Apostles Creed contains some of the most precious, foundational truths in the Christian faith. In fact, as we begin today, we must remember a basic but imperative reality, namely that we are. The Person of Christ is the very cause and ground of our faith. We do not simply believe in some immaterial, “god”, we believe in the God-man, Jesus Christ. The perfect and powerful, mighty and merciful Savior of the universe. Today’s statement makes three assertions that are crucial to the Christian faith.

1. Jesus is the Son of God

- a. This is a familiar refrain in Christian circles but it cannot, and should not, be missed
- b. We believe that the title of Son of God is incredibly weighty and packed with biblical meaning
 - i. First, the title reminds us of Jesus’ identity
 1. The term Son is a biblical term but it does not denote all of what it means to us in our temporal, mortal state
 2. To say that I am a son of my father is to attribute my origin, or creation (from a human perspective) to my father
 3. While this is the case for mankind, we do not believe that Jesus had a beginning
 - a. Whereas there was once a time when I was not, there has never been a time when Jesus wasn’t because Jesus is Eternally God
 4. The above statement is simply a reprisal of what the Bible teaches stating that Christ “was” in the beginning (John 1:1)
 5. Nevertheless, He is begotten by His father (John 3:16)
 6. What does this mean? The term “begotten” is a statement about the Son’s relationship to the Father and His shared essence of Divinity
 - a. Since the Son has always existed, He was not created. However, the Father is distinct from the Son, they are not the same Person.
 - b. Nevertheless, the Son is God just as the Father is God precisely because the Father’s essence is also the possession of the Son’s.
 - c. We believe that God is One in His essence. There is no disunity or differentiation in the substance of each member of the Trinity
 - d. Additionally, we also confess that each Person in the Trinity is distinct.
 - e. How does this work?

- i. The answer is that the Son is the only begotten Son of God.
- ii. The Son exists, eternally, in relationship to the Father as a Son.
- iii. He functions, in redemption, in obedience to the Father's will but this does not mean that He is less than the Father. Instead, they both receive worship as God and both rule and reign as Divine
- f. So, Jesus is God and the Father is God but they are distinct in their identities and relate to one another in a specific way

7. The significance of the phrase "the ONLY Son"

- a. Some might say, only Son? I thought I was a son of God too!
- b. While it is true that in Christ we have been given the right to be called "sons and daughters" of God, our Sonship is an adopted Sonship. We are grafted into the body, reconciled to the Father and adopted into the family but our adoption is predicated on the imputed righteousness of the Son on our behalf. We need His Divine righteousness and holiness to cover us as a means of entry into the heavenly family
- c. We are not intrinsically righteous and holy, neither are we Divine.
- d. There is only One inherently Divine Son and His name is Jesus!

8. What does this matter? Well, historically one of the great lies of false religions is grounded in an additional claim of Divinity. Most cults and false religions either: attempt to deny the Divinity of Christ (like Islam, Judaism, etc.) OR they claim that their leader is ANOTHER iteration of Divinity (think Mormonism, Hinduism, etc.)

9. The statement then that Christ is the ONLY Son of God protects us from both extremes and grounds our faith in the exclusive means of salvation which is through Christ alone (John 14:6)

2. Jesus is our Lord

- a. The fact that Christ is the only Son of God lends itself quite nicely to the next affirmation, not only is Jesus the Son of God, He is our Lord
- b. Why is this the case? Precisely because He is God!
 - i. Whenever the Divinity of Christ is ignored or minimized, sinfulness and autonomy abound
 - ii. Conversely, when we begin to recognize and remember the biblical teaching that Christ is Lord, we are reminded that He is in charge!

- c. To be Lord over something is to be the sole and final authority
 - i. A servant is not above His master, neither is a subject free to disobey His Lord
 - ii. The Christian faith, therefore, is not a faith of freedom from authority, it is a faith that teaches freedom to obey authority
- d. This statement wars against the many “Christians” who claim that Jesus can somehow be their Savior without being their Lord
 - i. Dear brother and sister, if Jesus isn’t Lord, He isn’t a Savior at all
 - ii. It is precisely because Jesus is Lord (over sin, over death, over Satan, over creation and over us) that He is able to save us to the uttermost
 - 1. If there is no recognition of the Lordship of Christ, there should be real concern that the subject knows Christ at all
- 3. Finally, we see that Jesus is the Messiah
 - a. The term “Christ” literally means “anointed One”
 - b. The word is not Jesus’ last name (like Robert Rowland or Aaron Bobo), instead it is a descriptor, a statement about the identity of the One we know as Jesus
 - c. Jesus was anointed to be our Messiah, He was appointed from eternity past by the Father to be the Savior of the world
 - d. It was ordained by the Trinity, before the foundation of the earth, that Jesus would take on flesh and dwell among us as the One chosen to take away the sins of the world
 - e. The little article “the” is packed with significance in the Apostles Creed
 - i. “The” denotes exclusivity
 - ii. There is only One Christ and it is Jesus
 - iii. There is “no other name given amongst men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)
 - iv. Christ is our exclusive, final and enduring hope!
 - f. This explains why the Christian faith is so averse to culture
 - g. Whereas plurality and “open minded tolerance” are the mantras of the day, the Christian faith says there is one way to salvation and it is through the Christ
 - i. May we boldly confess this truth and may we live with conviction that Jesus is the Christ