

YOU ARE WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Romans 1:16

September 16, 2007 Sunday, p.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Baptist's are not creedal people.
 1. Strictly speaking, creeds are lists of requirements one must believe or adhere to be a part of a group, church, or denomination.
 2. Baptists, instead, formulate "statements of faith" which contain what most of us could agree on, but are not requirements for membership or fellowship ("Baptist Faith and Message: 1925, 1963, 2000).
- B. The first recorded creed is called "The Apostle's Creed", not because they wrote it, but because it is very old.
 1. The first was thought to have been written around 120-150 A.D. (example handed out).
 2. Its final form came in the 4th century. Read together.
 3. Although Baptists don't adhere to creeds, this is not to say there are no benefits we can derive from them.
 4. Therefore, today we begin a series on The Apostle's Creed. Let's seek answers to a few introductory questions.

I. FIRST, WHY IS THIS CREED IMPORTANT?

- A. Judges 21:25 describes not only the days of the judges in the O.T., but even our own day.
- B. What do you believe? Listen to what one young man said when asked this question.

Consider this quote from a 20-something backpacker in Boston when asked what he believed: "I don't know what I believe in. And if I believe—I believe there's some Higher Power, I think. But I don't know. Like right now I'm at a point where I don't know what to believe, but I'm open to everything. So I like to believe in everything, because I don't know what it is I truly believe in."
- C. Where do your beliefs come from?
 1. "Within"-your opinions, feelings, or best guesses?
 2. "Outside"
 - a. Parents, friends, teachers, church?
 - b. Something like the Apostle's Creed?
 3. What purpose do creeds serve?
 - a. Corrects today's "me-centered" theology. (Pirates of the Caribbean Theology).
 - b. Reminds us that truth isn't optional or multiple choice.
 - c. Reminds us there are boundaries to the Christian faith. It does matter what we believe.

II. SECOND, WHERE DID THIS CREED COME FROM?

- A. The word "creed" comes from the Latin word "credo", meaning "I believe".
 1. Didn't begin as a formal document, but a baptismal formula. (Question and Answer format).
 2. Thought to have been first written down in the middle of the first century, then finalized by the 4th century.
- B. It helped the early Christians and Early Church refute the heresies circulating in the first few centuries (i.e. Gnosticism, which denied the humanity of Jesus).
- C. It's important to remember our first source is the Bible-2 Timothy 3:16.
- D. Here are six quick facts about this creed.
 - First, it is very old. Scholars believe that its earliest form can be traced back to A.D. 120.
 - Second, it was not written by the Apostles. It is called the Apostles' Creed because it reflects what the apostles taught. It summarizes apostolic doctrine.
 - Third, it is brief. Our version contains 114 words.

- Fourth, it is God-centered. In fact, it is Trinitarian. The first sentence deals with God the Father, the second with God the Son, the third with God the Holy Spirit.
- Fifth, it is selective. The Creed touches on the central issues of the Christian faith, but there is much it passes over. It says nothing about Satan, angels, demons, predestination, baptism, church government, or the details of the Second Coming.
- Sixth, it is easy to memorize.

III. WHAT IMPORTANCE DOES THIS CREED HAVE FOR US?

- A. Helps us determine what we believe. (First two words=I believe).
- B. Our salvation depends on what we believe—Romans 1:16 & 10:9-10.
- C. We are what we believe. Our actions reflect what we believe.

CONCLUSION

- A. One final thought: The Creed doesn't begin, "We Believe", but "I Believe". Why?
 1. Because belief is always personal.
 2. Doesn't matter what your parents or spouse believes.
- B. The Creed begins, "I believe". Do you?