

"In Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord"

Apostles Creed

Colossians 1:15-20

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Dan. PIT. Morning! Colossians 1:15-20

Intro Week 3 Creed

If you have not been with us, this is the third week of a sermon series we are walking through looking at the Apostles Creed, a written and spoken declaration of beliefs Christians have used for nearly 2000 years.

And we have established that we believe in God, who is not limited by power, time, or space. Who is 3 persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and that our belief in God is more than just knowledge, belief that shapes our life.

So let's stand and let's read the creed together as we start this morning...

THE APOSTLES CREED

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.

Pray.

This week, we are going to focus entirely on the line **"We believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord."**

Now I just need you all in on this with me. It's a little crazy I'm here... I am preaching Jesus as Lord, as someone who left the church in my late teens.

- I didn't just walk away, I was a critic
- I interrogated people with religious beliefs, especially Christians
- I was the person we are all anxious to talk to now, you can ask my wife.
- I thought that everyone could be pleasing to God in their own way
- And so I lived life my own way, doing whatever I wanted to do

I had built everything that I wanted to have, a great job, in the city I wanted to live in, surrounded by people I loved.

Except... I was hit with a longing and depression I could not understand. So I started to examine everything in my life and why it was not enough. I started ending relationships, questioning my life, and seeing a counselor.

In the midst of that, I ended up back in church where every week, my assertions about Jesus were confronted. Did He really live and die here on earth? Are His teachings good and true? Is He outdated? Did He really come back from the dead? And if He did, what does that mean for me? Who was Jesus, really?

It became the most important question to me. And in fact, There is no question more important to your life than who Jesus is. Who do you say Jesus is?

Even Jesus asked His disciples this question: Look at Matthew 16:13-15 with me

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

But, who do you say that I am? All of us here should ask ourselves that question. Who do we say Jesus is? People say all kinds of things about Jesus:

The Islamic faith teaches that Jesus was just a prophet, a messenger from God
Latter Day Saints (commonly known as Mormons) equate Him to an angel, less than God
Like the secular Westerners around us, you might see Jesus as a hippie socialist revolutionary
Or you might choose seemingly the most safe and people pleasing choice, Jesus was a good teacher! We can all agree on that! We are good right?

That is where I landed for a while and I am ashamed of it today. It was actually pretty foolish because of two things. 1) it was more about me not wanting to hurt anybody's feelings than it was about what I actually believed, but even more importantly, 2) it ignored a lot of what Jesus said.

So don't make the same mistake I did. Let C.S. Lewis bring you to some honesty as well with this:

I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic— on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg— or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Your only categories this morning are that:

He was a **liar**, giving up his whole life and death on the cross to maintain His argument for being God

A **lunatic**, a delusional man who believed He was God in the flesh and went around speaking absolute nonsense

Or, He is who He said He was, **Lord**.

This is where the Apostles Creed points us to in Scripture. Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord. That is our Orthodoxy, as Tim showed us, our right belief, what we know to be true about God.

So let's talk about what we believe as Christians, and what Christians have taught for thousands of years, and then we'll circle back at the end to help us know how to live in light of it.

If you have a Bible, turn to Colossians 1, we are going to start at v15

If you dont - Bible in the seat back - our gift to you

Lets turn there

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Out of this text, Paul, who wrote this letter, is pointing out 3 things about Jesus we are going to look at today.

The Person of Jesus - Who Jesus was

The Position of Jesus - Where He stands in power

The Purpose of Jesus - Why He was here

So let's get into v15 and get started with the Person of Jesus

The Person of Jesus

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

We have a problem that not many at Paul's time writing this letter would have had. There are people today who think Jesus was just a myth, not a real person. I just want to inform you that this is not a well respected position in academia.

This just is not debated.

We must all affirm that Jesus actually existed. If you came here today and you disagree with me on this, I know I personally cannot convince you. I'm probably a little biased. So, here is what Bart Ehrman, a well decorated agnostic, and critic of historical texts has to say about Jesus:

["Despite the enormous range of opinion, there are several points on which virtually all scholars of antiquity agree. Jesus was a Jewish man, known to be a preacher and teacher, who was crucified \(a Roman form of execution\) in Jerusalem during the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea"](#)

You really cannot take that position. No historical scholar worth their stuff would agree with you.

Jesus was real.

Not only was He a man on earth, Paul is also exclaiming throughout this entire passage the beauty of Jesus being God. He starts with **He is the image of the invisible God**

When Paul says image, He means physical presence. He is meaning Jesus is the Son within Trinity here in person. Which implies a lot of things about Jesus too. Like last week when Tim taught about God being creator, not limited by time, space, inability, or neediness, all of those are also true about Jesus. He is the image of God.

That is who Jesus claimed to be, the Son of the Father, come to earth in the flesh
Let me show you where Jesus claimed this so we are all on the same page.

John 8:58, while being tested by Jewish leaders, Jesus says
Before Abraham was, I am

This name I am is the same word in Greek for the OT Hebrew name Yahweh. This is a special sacred name passed to Moses to refer to God. And Jesus says directly to the Jewish leaders questioning Him that He is God, He is the I AM that they follow.

That was not the only time though, I want us to look at one more time Jesus claimed to be God. This will be up on the screen.

In John 14:8-11, Jesus is being asked to show His disciples God, to reveal the Father to them.

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

At the last supper, the disciples wanted Jesus to show them who the Father was and Jesus pointed to himself. He said through me you will know the Father. He dwells in me.

Jesus is showing that He is unique. The Father dwells in Him. He is the way to the Father.

Jesus is God.

We are going to get much more into the Trinity as we go on through the Creed, but what you need to know for today is that Jesus was the Son of God, one of the Trinity, here on earth.

Next, we are going to look at the **Position of Jesus**.

By position I mean station or role. What does Jesus do? Let's continue to v16 and 17.

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Jesus is Creator

What we can see about Jesus' position here is that He is the creator. He created all things.

This solidifies even more Jesus' position as God, that He was with the Father and Spirit in Genesis 1 bringing life to the world.

Jesus created everything we can see and not see, here in front of us, and even in heaven. There's nothing left, there is nothing outside of His creative work.

EVEN as Paul continues, over dominions, rulers, or authorities. He is referring to more than just presidents and kings here, but angels and demons too.

Which if you think that was a weird note to add, just remember that every time Jesus confronted a demon, the demon was terrified and obeyed Him

Jesus' position is a position of power.

And not just created all of these things, but sustains them too

Jesus is sustainer

If Jesus created all things, that means He knows how everything is supposed to work. He designed it. He fit all of the pieces together.

So when Paul is adding that in Jesus, all things are held together, that means that Jesus is working within His creation to make sure that all things are working correctly.

Imagine a director or a CEO, walking through their company at each level, checking on every moving piece to make sure the company as a whole is functioning as it should. Meeting with the managers, watching over production, tweaking the gears and machines, and getting every little piece right where it needs to be.

That example is like Jesus, in His position, in relation to His creation, making sure that everything is working the way that it is supposed to work.

Lastly,
Jesus is Ruler

There's something else we see in verse 17

17 And he is before all things,

When we see this word "before" this is not making a reference to time, it is making a reference to position. Another word we can use for it is supreme. Jesus is supreme over all things.

Showing a position of highest authority, greatest importance, Jesus being supreme means He is at the top of it all.

We have a word for someone who has that kind of power and authority. Someone who is master of it all, supreme over everything.

It is Lord. That is Jesus' position.

And His Lordship is not a preference or opinion we can have.

Because Jesus existed as God before creation
Because it was through Jesus all things were made
Because He is the one holding all of creation together

It is because of who Jesus is and what He is actively doing now that He is Lord.

Paul has one more point to make, to show us Jesus' purpose v18.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church.

This gets us to our last point,
Jesus' purpose.

Jesus' purpose is to be head of the Church.

The word Headship in the Bible refers to authority, being over something. And the church is referring to everyone who lives under Jesus' rule, all throughout time.

So when Paul points out that Jesus is the head of the church, He is saying that Jesus has the position and authority to bring His people to holiness.

Bring His people to the way He intended from the beginning of creation. And His primary means of doing this is His purpose of coming to earth as a man with us.

Let's continue on from v18-20

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Jesus' personhood, position, and purpose all come to a head at the cross. What Christians believe about Jesus is that we needed a savior.

In this series, we opened up Genesis to talk about God created everything in the beginning. If we would have kept going, we would have gotten to Genesis 3, where we get to what Christians refer to as the Fall.

The reason why Jesus has to lead His church back to holiness is because at our core, we are sinners and rebels. We have received the gift of life and the way we are supposed to use it, but we fall short. We sin. We dishonor God and His people. It is because of this that sickness and death have entered the world. We brought that on through the sin of Adam.

Because of our sin, we are not pleasing to God. We need to reconcile with Him. We need to make peace. The bad news is that we can't. We cannot do that. What do we have to offer a powerful infinite God?

However, Jesus is pleasing to God. Jesus can reconcile us to the Father. And He did. What Paul is affirming about Jesus is that He used His perfect life as a man, His power as God, and His position as Lord to come to earth and shed His blood on the cross so that we can have peace with God.

That is who we know Jesus is.

He is the Christ, who paid for our sins
His Only Son, One in being with the Father
Our Lord, master of everything, including our life

Does that not stir you up in awe for Jesus? God, became man, to die for us???

And look at the authority that gives Him, He lived, and died, and rose again. Jesus defeated our greatest enemy. Death. So that we would not end in death, but eternal life with Him. That should move us to honor and respect and obedience!

A friend of ours was sharing about someone who just professed Jesus as Lord and what she has to say captures this so well. This woman who just came to Christ cannot see the world the same way she did before. So much so, she was moved to worship of Jesus from watching a documentary about Zebras. She saw them on the TV and was just like "Wow, look at the creative work of Jesus. Even the Zebras are unique and beautiful and display His mighty power!"

Jesus as Lord stirs something in us that shows us that everything we do, everything we see, everything we can't see, it all is pointing to Jesus.

Orthopraxy

That is why there is no question more important to your life than who Jesus is. He doesn't let us sit on the fence with this. His question to His disciples "But who do you say that I am?" extends to you today.

Make a decision on Jesus. Was he a liar, was He out of his mind, or was He actually Lord over all?

If He is Lord over all, then we must learn to submit to Jesus in all areas of our lives. I have three for us this morning to move us from right belief that Jesus is Lord, to right practice, living within His Kingdom.

Trust Jesus with the World

If everything Jesus said is true, then He is in fact Lord over all. If He is God, then He is present everywhere, not limited by power or time, and is holding all things together.

There are no gaps in this. King Jesus isn't choosing to ignore you if you feel like He is not working. His wisdom, power, and authority is greater than yours, so you have to learn to trust Him when you think He isn't holding all things together.

And right now, I know our church family is facing circumstances that make this really hard to believe. We've received alarming phone calls, family emergencies, medical diagnoses and tragedies in the last couple of weeks nobody could have expected. Let me just pause and take a moment to say to you that Jesus Christ is present in it all and nothing slips through His fingers. Even if it is hard to believe right now like you used to, and if your current circumstances make you feel like this cannot be true...

He is present, He is patient, and He wants nothing more than to see your circumstances be brought under His redemptive power.

Jesus is over the world. You can trust that He is present and working.

Submit your desires to Jesus

When you confess Jesus as Lord and you are brought into His Kingdom, that means you are willing to submit your desires over to Him. This means turning away from sin, fighting against temptations, and following the commands of the Bible.

Jesus does not share His throne with anything. Yet we too often seek to meet our desires through anything other than trusting Jesus.

We cannot say Jesus is Lord, but also I need more money to actually give me the security I want.

We cannot say Jesus is Lord, but His love is not enough so I am going to turn to other people, pornography, or fantasy until I feel loved.

We cannot say Jesus is Lord, but actually I need to be the one making all the decisions, because Jesus doesn't do it right.

When we do this, we are like citizens of God's Kingdom smuggling contraband in through the walls. It reveals our distrust of Him. Remember that Jesus is after your holiness over all things. And that means trusting Him with your desires.

Some of us will need to search our hearts, find where we do not Trust Jesus as Lord, and repent,

Give Jesus your worship

Lastly, Give Jesus your worship!

Jesus is worthy of your worship. Look at who Jesus is. The Creator, Son of the Father, came to earth and took on flesh so that He could give His life over, suffer and die, to bring us back to His Kingdom. We should be moved to love, adoration, and reverence of Jesus for this!

So when we lead worship, sing his praises, He is worth it!

When you hear encouraging truth about God in a sermon, speak his praise!

Be willing to give King Jesus the glory and honor he deserves.

Trust Jesus with the World, your desires, and your worship.

So let us celebrate that Jesus is our King as we always do every Sunday. Through prayer, communion, and worship.

Prayer, Communion, and Worship.

If you'd like to receive prayer to profess Jesus as Lord, or you feel that the Spirit is working on something in you that you want prayer over, there are people around the room with blue lanyards who would love to pray for you.

We are going to sing a couple songs together lifting up the Lord Jesus in worship. I encourage you to sing with your hearts and declare what is true about Him.

Lastly, we are going to take communion. This is a practice of remembering Jesus' body and blood shed for us so that we can be reconciled with God, if you are not a believer, this is the only thing we would ask you not to do yet, just because you would be saying something is true of you that is not true yet. Instead of communion, we invite you to take Christ, and there will be pastors up front who would love to talk with you after the Gathering.

So let us respond to Jesus as Lord in prayer, communion, and worship.