

Apostles Creed

“I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins”

Week 11 | August 27th, 2023
Community Group Discussion Guide

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership Class

Sunday, September 17th | 4pm-6:30pm

We believe the church is central to all God is doing in the world. When you read the New Testament, wherever the gospel is proclaimed, people believe, disciples are made, and then churches are formed. When you put your faith in Jesus, you don't just get God as your Father, but you are now put in relationship with other Christians who are your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are now a part of the larger global Church, lived out in small local expressions, such as Citizens Church Charlotte.

This is why membership is so important. It's you committing to play your role in the larger family of God through a particular local congregation.

Our Membership Class is the first step towards membership at Citizens Church. If you're interested in becoming a member at Citizens, or just interested in finding out more about who we are, join us Sunday, September 17th from 4pm-6:30pm.

Coffee + light refreshments are provided. Childcare is also provided, but please register in advance.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

Family Vacation

November 10-12, Black Mountain, NC

Registration for this year's Family Vacation is now open! We value the chance to get away, retreat, rest, and spend time together as a church family, and we'd love for you to join us this year! On November 10-12, we are heading to the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC. We will be staying in two cabins on the property, and will have a main meeting area for family style meals and sessions.

Family vacation is open to all Citizens Church members, members-in-progress (have taken membership class), and children of current members. The cost of the trip is \$100/adult and \$25/child. Scholarships are available if needed, but please talk to Dan about that sooner rather than later.

If you're planning to attend, please register ASAP. The earlier you register, the easier it is for us to plan for the weekend. You can register and get more details by clicking the graphic below.

[MORE INFO + REGISTRATION](#)

SERIES RECAP

For the past 1,800 years, millions upon millions of Christians worldwide have recited the Apostle's Creed as part of their corporate worship. Written shortly after the death of Christ, the Apostles' Creed summarizes foundational Christian beliefs. It is a helpful statement which unites the church, instructs the believer, protects against false doctrine, and points to a glorious God and what He desires for His people. Over the course of this series, we will explore the ancient creed together seeking to deepen ourselves in our ancient historic faith and, more importantly, in the God of our faith.

Let us read the Apostles Creed together to start the evening.

"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."

PRAYER + SCRIPTURE

Open with a brief word of prayer: "God, we thank you for this time together. We open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us. Allow us to hear your voice and experience your work among us. Come Holy Spirit."

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Read *Psalms 130*

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. 8 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

1-2 minutes of silent reflection.

Close with this short prayer: "God, we cannot stand blameless before you on our own, but out of your mercy, we are forgiven. Jesus, our hope is in you, that you remove our guilt. May we be reminded and encouraged of our forgiveness by the Spirit and learn to live as those forgiven and accepted by our Lord.

As you reflect on Psalm 130 what is the Holy Spirit showing or teaching you?

SERMON DISCUSSION

Let's have a discussion around these main points from Sunday's teaching:

WE DENY SIN

In the sermon, we heard that we have a tendency to deny or minimize our sin. In a number of different ways, we retreat from the difficult and vulnerable work of honestly looking at our sin and owning our shortcomings. We do this through:

Self righteousness - inflating our view of self such that our sin is no big deal

Legalism - earning our own righteousness to try and outweigh our sin

Victim Mentality - nullifying our responsibility for holiness based on what we've experienced

Personality Quirks - equating sin with who we are, justifying through our "personality traits"

Therapeutic Values - dealing with the feeling of guilt rather than actual guilt itself

How do you see these attempts to deny your sinfulness in your own relationship with God?

HOW THE BIBLE VIEWS SIN

In the sermon, we saw how the Bible paints a much darker and deeper view of sin than we typically have. We saw the Scriptures say:

Luke 5 – Sin is spiritual sickness

Isaiah 64 – Sin is a pollution

Isaiah 1 – Sin is a heavy burden

Romans 6 – Sin is a cruel slave master

Colossians 2 – Sin puts us under a debt

Ephesians 2 – Sin makes us dead

Which of these reminders from Scripture are helpful for you as you consider the gravity and weight of your own sin and sinfulness?

OUR HOPE IS IN FORGIVENESS

If we deny our sin, we also deny forgiveness. And if we deny forgiveness, we deny the great Forgiver. Our hope cannot be in our own attempts to solve our guilt in sin, but in the forgiveness offered by the life and death of Jesus. That is the Gospel! That our forgiveness is freely offered because of the cross.

How does the gospel (the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection) free you up to be honest about your sin and your need for a Savior?

SERIES PRACTICE

One of our key discipleship values as a church is that of practice. Moving forward, we are going to begin emphasizing one of our key spiritual practices during each sermon series. This practice is meant to coincide with the theme of the series, and something we invite our church to practice as a part of their spiritual formation.

During the Apostles Creed series, we are emphasizing the practice of Scripture. Getting into God's Word and getting God's Word into us is vital for helping form our doctrine and fuel our discipleship.

Spend some time before you close talking about what group members are reading, and how you can press into Scripture as a group this summer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray over what was shared in the discussion, for your group to be united in the gospel, and for help from the Holy Spirit to be shaped to be more like Jesus as we put God's ways into practice.