

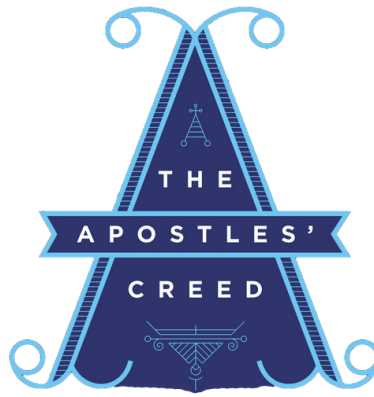


# BELIEF

Sept 27 -  
Dec 6

A Study of the Apostles' Creed





# I BELIEVE

## A STUDY

*Through the Apostles' Creed*

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**September 26 - December 6**

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Written by TJ Johnson

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# I BELIEVE

Jesus began his public ministry with these words, “Repent and believe in the gospel.”

Believe. What an interesting concept. Everyone believes in something. Children believe in Santa Claus. Conspiracy theorists believe in a living Elvis. Flat Earthers believe in...a flat earth. Marxist, or those influenced by Marxism, believe in themselves. And we Christians believe in Jesus.

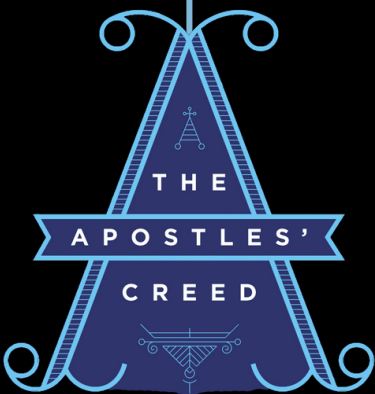
Belief is so core to who we are that we are often called, “believers.” But what does that mean exactly? When Jesus said, “believe in the gospel,” did He just mean believe that God loves you or is there much more to belief? And if belief was Jesus’ main message and mission, then you must ask yourself... what do YOU believe?

Over the next eleven weeks, as we work our way through one of the earliest Christian declarations, The Apostle’s Creed, we will look at what it means to believe the Gospel. It is my deepest desire that through our time together each one of you will be able to wholeheartedly declare, “I believe.”

Believing with you,

Pastor TJ





In God the Father

Sept 26

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

"Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts" is a play that centers around two men, Vladimir and Estragon, who spend the entire play waiting for a third person named Godot. It is a mixture of suffering, injustice, poverty, comedy, tragedy, philosophical conversations, and of course...waiting. \*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\*

Godot never arrives. In the end, Vladimir and Estragon are seen sitting and still waiting as the curtain closes. The point is obvious. We are Vladimir and Estragon, foolish bums waiting for a God(ot) who will never arrive.

As we have moved into the 21st century, more and more people have adopted the worldview that there is no God or, at the very least, not a personal God who shows up.

But perhaps God never arrived for Vladimir and Estragon because they were never REALLY seeking God. When asked what it is that he has requested from Godot, Vladimir replies: "Oh ... nothing very definite." "A kind of prayer?" "Precisely." "A vague supplication?" "Exactly."

If you're reading this, I doubt very much that you disbelieve in God. But I wonder, does the above describe your relationship with God the Father? Do you feel as if you have been waiting your whole life for God to show up? Do you pray vague supplications to the generic god from whom you don't expect much?

The God of the Bible is vastly different from the God(ot) of Beckett's play. He is real. He is personal. He is powerful. And He always shows up for those who seek Him.

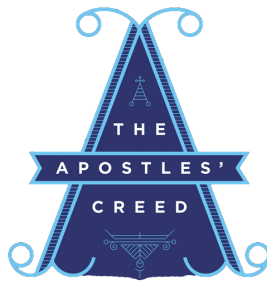
Deuteronomy 4:24

You will seek the Lord your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Join us Sunday as we together discover the infinitely powerful and intimately personal God.

Seeking and Finding with you,

Pastor TJ



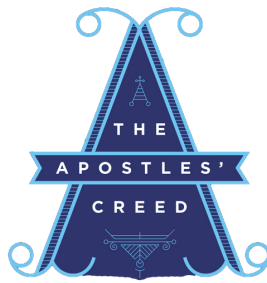
*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

## Ice Breaker

1. What are some common ideas about “god.”
2. How is God the Father different from other gods in other religions?

## Infinitely Powerful

3. Read Psalm 115:1-3. Take some time to further discuss what God can and cannot do.
4. Several examples from Scripture were given of God’s sovereignty, what other examples can you give?
5. Read Genesis 18:14. Share with the group a time God proved to you His power.
6. Read Psalm 57:2. What current purpose does God have for your life?
7. Do you believe that He has the power to fulfill that purpose?
8. What do your recent prayers reveal about your belief in God the Father?



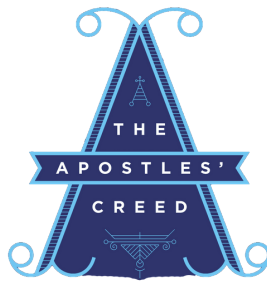
## Intimately Personal

9. Have you ever thought that God was all-powerful but not all good?
10. What are some ways to overcome our doubt of God's goodness?
11. Read Matthew 6:8. Share with the group a need that God provided for and then share some current needs you have?
12. Read Matthew 7:9-11. Share of a time you were thankful God's answer to your prayer was no because it was not ultimately good for you.
13. Read Exodus 3:7. Take some time as a group to pray with anyone who feels as if God does not see or hear or know or care.
14. We often talk about Jesus' act of love through His death, discuss the Father's act of love for us.
15. Read 1 John 1:9. Why does God command us to confess our sin?
16. Take some time to quietly or publicly confess sin and receive the Father's forgiveness.

## Conclusion

17. Read Matthew 6:10. Is there anything that you find difficult to say, "God's Kingdom and God's will" to rather than your own kingdom and will?
18. How has God made Himself personal to you this week?
19. What is one thing you can do in response to the sermon?





## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



In God the Son

Oct 4

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

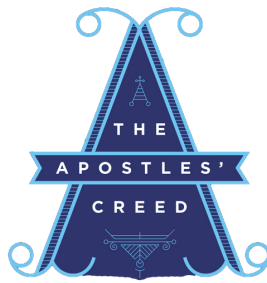
In 1966, Time Magazine, for the first time in their history, printed a photoless cover. Instead of an image, readers were confronted with three gut-punching words: Is God Dead? The article sought to answer that question by stating, "As always, faith is something of an irrational leap in the dark...and unlike in earlier centuries, there is no way today for churches to threaten or compel men to face that leap."

Is God dead? To answer their question, we must face a different question, asked almost two thousand years earlier. In Matthew 16, Jesus turns to His disciples and inquires, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responds by saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the LIVING God." Later, after Thomas was confronted with a risen, living Jesus, he would respond by saying, "My Lord and my God." A God who was very much alive.

For Peter and Thomas and for millions who have encountered the risen Jesus, faith was never about an irrational leap in the dark, but rather a logical and joyful leap into the light as they embraced the Son of God, who is the image of the invisible God. Is God dead? In short, no. But He did die (physically) and on the third day rose again from the dead. This Sunday, as we continue our series on the Apostles' Creed, we must ask anew that age-old question, "Who do you say that I am?" Be very careful with how you answer; life and death hang in the balance.

Leaping into the light with you,

Pastor TJ



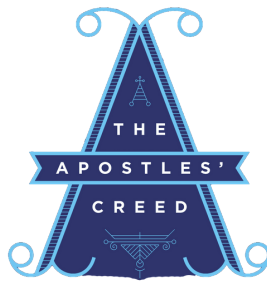
*I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.*

### Ice Breaker

1. Share with the group your name and the significance behind your name
2. Of the four names used in the Ichthus Statement, Apostle's Creed and Colossians 1, which is the most significant to you and why?

### A Historical Figure

3. Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was in Mark 8:27. Reflect upon the question and respond in the group who you think Jesus was, and is.
4. How to the Gospels describe Jesus? If possible, provide some examples
5. Are the Gospels historically reliable? Why, or why not?
6. Read Matthew 1:21
7. What does the Bible teach us of Jesus' role as Saviour?
8. Have you experienced the saving work of Jesus? If so, share of that experience



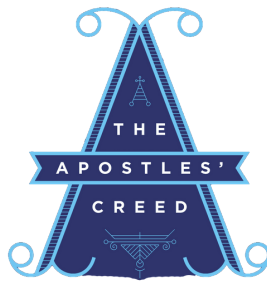
## Prophetical Figure

9. Several prophecies of the Messiah were mentioned during the sermon, can you think of other prophecies fulfilled by Jesus?
10. What was the purpose of recording so many Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament?
11. Recall the three Old Testament roles (offices) that were considered messiah/anointed (מָשִׁיחַ) and discuss how Jesus fulfills each of those roles for us today.
12. Share with the group a way you have fellowship with Jesus this week as either prophet, priest, or king.

## Son of God

13. Give a simple definition or explanation of the trinity and discuss why it is so important\*.
14. What are the various ways Jesus claimed to be God?
15. What difference does it make that Jesus is fully man and fully God?
16. Read Colossians 1:15 & 1 John 1:1-4. How does Jesus being both God and man help us have faith?
17. In your opinion what is the greatest evidence of Jesus' deity?





## Personal Figure

18. What is the Biblical meaning and implication of the word Lord (κύριος )
19. Read Colossians 1:3. Why does Colossians 1:3 and the Apostles' Creed both say OUR Lord?
20. What are the various things that Colossians 1 teaches Jesus is Lord over?
21. In your own experience, what areas of life are hardest to surrender to Jesus and why?
22. Share with the group how someone can make Jesus their Lord.
23. What is one thing you can do in response to the sermon?

\*For help on understanding the trinity:

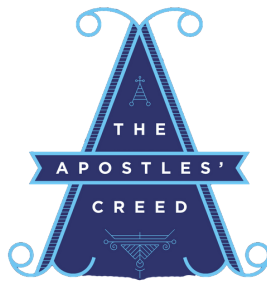
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/god/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-doctrine-of-the-trinity/#four-essential-affirmations>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj0mE78SuWA>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/the-doctrine-of-the-trinity>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIO5APqsXyc>

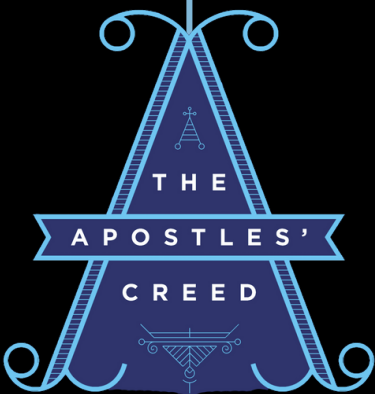


## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



In the Incarnation

Oct 11

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Many world religions offer humans the possibility of becoming gods. Satan's conversation with Eve, "you will become like God." was such an offer. But Christianity doesn't say, be good or follow some clearly laid out plan and eventually you will become a god. No, it takes an unexpected turn and deviates from the world religions by saying, while people hope to become god; God humbled himself to become man. And this is the beauty of God's plan. The Son of God became man that men might become sons of God.

Because we couldn't reach heaven without Him, He brought heaven down. In so doing, we have a God who is near us like no other. Do not miss the power of the incarnation. We have a God who feels what we feel, experiences what we experience.

Tired? He's felt that. Disappointed? He felt that too. Family problems? Did He ever experience that! Loss? Think of this, the Son of God, who had the power to raise the dead, chose not to use His powers when Joseph (His earthly father) died. Instead, He bore the same grief we all feel at the loss of a loved one. What restraint...what love.

Yet, let us be clear, the incarnation is comforting, not because it shows us a God who gets us, but because it shows us a God who rescues us. What good is it if our God finds himself stuck in the mire along with everyone else?

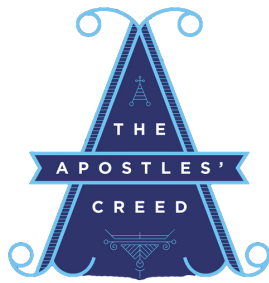
Our God is in the mud, not as a victim, but as a victor. Yes, we have a God who can empathize with our weaknesses. Yes, we have a God who has experienced the same temptations we experience, faced the same fallen world we face every day. He is in the mud, indeed. Yet he did not sin. He is the victor, not the victim.

As Jurgen Moltmann once said, "God became man that dehumanized men might become true men. We become true men in the community of the incarnate, the suffering and loving, the human God. This Sunday, Dr. Chris will speak to us about this suffering, loving, human God.

Exalting in the incarnation with you,

Pastor TJ





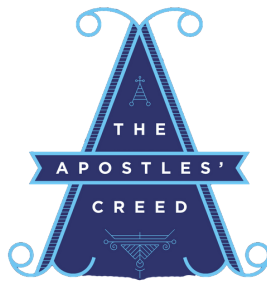
*I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.*

### Ice Breaker

1. As best as you can, explain what the term “incarnation” means to you. Share your thoughts with the group
2. Reflect on Jesus becoming human. Then imagine yourself living in 1st Century Palestine. What do you think Jesus had to give up becoming human?

### The Word became Flesh

3. Read John 1:1-2. Reflecting on what John wrote, why would Jesus ever leave His perfect existence to become human?
4. In which way did the first two humans, and all those after them, destroy a perfect Creation?
5. Read John 1:14 and 3:16. In these verses we discover the reason for Jesus becoming human. What impact would Jesus becoming human have on the human race?
6. Read Phil. 2:5-7. Jesus, being God, could easily have been a king, or someone important. However, he was a son of a carpenter. Discuss in the group why you think Jesus was born so lowly
7. Why is the phrase: “who was conceived by the Holy Spirit” so important? Discuss in the group
8. Would you consider the phrase: “born of the Virgin Mary” to be an important aspect of the Creed? Why, or why not?



## **The Word is our Priest**

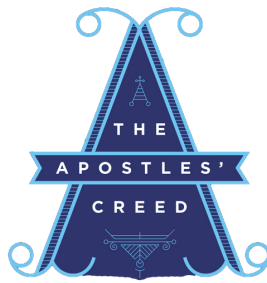
9. Read Hebrews 4:14. Here Paul shows that Jesus has become our high priest. Discuss in the group what this means for us
10. When you think of the term 'priest', what images and ideas come to mind? Discuss in the group your ideas of what a priest is
11. Leviticus 4 and 5 deals with sin offerings on behalf of those who sinned. All of these offerings had to be done by a priest. What set a priest apart from us so that they were able to carry out these offerings for us?
12. Read Hebrews 4:15 and Phil 2:8. What set Jesus apart from the priests in ancient times?
13. How does the fact that Jesus became man and completely obedient, affect our future with God?

## **The Word is our Sacrifice**

14. Discuss in the group why a sacrifice was needed for the sins of the people?
15. What does it mean for us that Jesus became fully human? Discuss in the group
16. When people deal with suffering, pain or disappointment, they usually would tell another that "...you don't understand...". Considering the life of Christ and what He went through, would you say that He 'does not understand' our lives, pain and disappointments? Why or why not?
17. Read Phil 2:8-11. What is the overall effect of Jesus becoming 'incarnate' in human form for the human race?



18. Discuss in the group what it means when we say: “I believe in the Incarnation”.



## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



In the Crucifixion

Oct 18

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed



Wooden. Rugged. Bloody. A splintering display of Roman brutality. And yet, in another light it is worshipful, righteous, beautiful; a glorious display of God's great love and power towards those who come to Him in faith.

The cross is the epicenter of the Christian faith and though unbelieving men and women deny it, it is in fact the epicenter of humanity and history. It is the purpose for which Christ came. It is the power that reconstructs that fractured imago dei. Doubt its power? Look no further than the Apostle Paul. It is the cross that Paul, the persecutor of Christians, would come to glory in (Galatians 6:14), preach about (1 Corinthians 1:23-24), meditate upon (1 Corinthians 2:2), and live for (Galatians 2:20) and ultimately die upon.

The cross is not the beginning chapters of the Christian life that we eventually graduate from and move on to grander things, no it is the fountain we continually go back to day after day to drink from. As Jesus says in John 6:53, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." In other words, unless you encounter the cross you are shadows of humanity poorly mimicking what it means to be truly human.

We can get many things wrong and disagree about many topics in this world, but not so when it comes to the cross. As J.C. Ryle once said, "Heaven or hell, happiness or misery, life or death, blessing or cursing in the last day - all hinges on the answer to the question: 'What do you think about the cross of Christ?'"

This weekend as we behold the cross, glory in the Suffering  
Servant who is the Sovereign Savior.

Glorying with you,

Pastor TJ



*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended to the dead*

### Ice Breaker

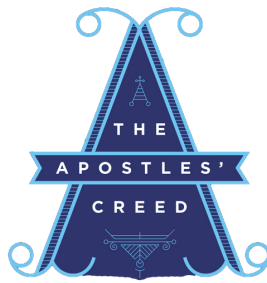
1. If Jesus' entrance into our world is transforming this world, in what ways has Jesus transformed you, your family, and community?

### The Suffering of the Cross

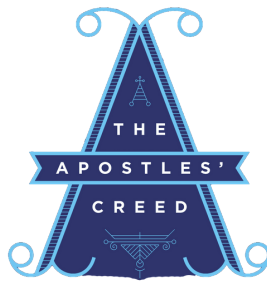
2. Of all the suffering that Jesus endured, which do you think was the hardest to endure?
3. Which of the sufferings of Jesus do you most identify with and why?
4. What would you say was the most significant (important) part of Christ's suffering?
5. The Creedal statement: "he descended into hell," has many possible meanings. From scripture, how do you understand Jesus' descent?
6. In what ways can/should we share in Jesus' suffering (1 Peter 4:13)?

### The Glory of the Cross

7. From 1 Peter 3:18-4:2 (see also 1 John 2:2, 2 Corinthians 5:21), what did Christ's death on the cross accomplish for us humans?
8. How does the suffering of Jesus reveal God's (Father, Son, and Spirit) great love for us?



9. If the (upward) cross reconciles us to God, what are some ways we can live in daily fellowship with Him?
10. What does it mean that Satan, death, and sin has been defeated by Jesus' death (consider the already/not yet victory of Jesus)?
11. Read 1 Peter 3:22. Have you ever experienced the destructive power of the spirit world? How does Jesus' victory over those powers give you hope today?
12. If the (downward) cross rescues us from Satan, how should that play out in your daily life?
13. Read 1 Peter 4:1-2 (see also 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23). How should Jesus' death on the cross affect how we relate to sin?
14. Read 1 Peter 2:21, 4:1. The (horizontal) cross reimages us, so what are some examples of Jesus loving God and men from the cross that have been most impactful in how you love God and man in the midst of great suffering?
15. What difference has the cross made in your life?



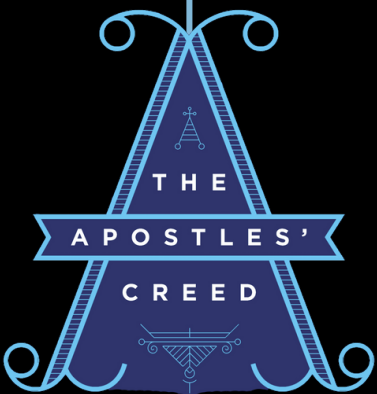
## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





In the Resurrection

Oct 25

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Last week we looked at the center of our faith, the cross. This week we move to the resurrection, for we must never divorce the cross from the empty tomb. The good news of Jesus isn't good news unless He has overcome death and the grave. If you were to study the sermons in the book of Acts, it would be rather obvious rather quickly that they ALL include the resurrection. The Gospel isn't complete without the resurrection!

Why? Because Jesus' bodily resurrection is an invitation for us all. He is inviting us to come and see (notice how many times that phrase is mentioned in the resurrection accounts). Come and see the power of God. Come and see the death defeating, sin slaying, power of the Savior. This weekend you are invited to that tomb. You are given a front-row seat to the event that changed the cosmos and can change your heart.

Mary went to the tomb and peered inside. Peter and John went to the tomb and peered inside. Thomas, James, Salome, Cleopas, Joanna, and scores of others went to the tomb; they encountered a resurrected Jesus. They touched Him. They heard Him speak. They saw Him eat. They beheld the glory of a physical, resurrected Jesus. And as a result, they were never the same.

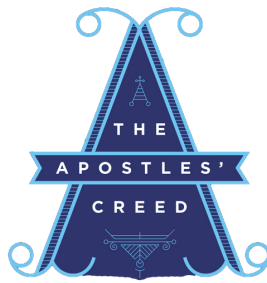
For thousands of years, followers have boldly declared, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord... (I believe that on) The third day He rose again from the dead."

Perhaps, over the past few weeks, you too have made this declaration. Hopefully, it has been more than just the moving of your tongue and vocal cords. Hopefully, it has sunk into your heart and transformed (is transforming) everything about you. As Adrian Warnock once wrote, "We cannot consistently believe Jesus has risen without also concluding we must worship and follow him."

As you come to the tomb, come ready to follow; come ready to worship.

Worshiping and following the RISEN Jesus with you,

Pastor TJ



*On the third day He rose again;*

### Ice Breaker

1. Us Christians may have become slightly desensitised when it comes to the resurrection. Attempting to understand the importance of the Resurrection, please read Matthew 28:1-20 for going on to the questions

### Over Nature

2. Read Matthew 28:2. How does this verse demonstrate God's power over nature? What impact does this have on you when you witness natural disaster in the media today?

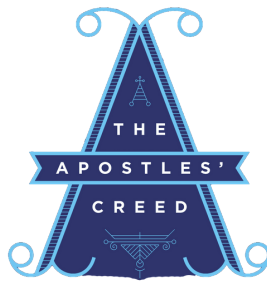
3. Please discuss in the group how you understood God's power over nature before, and after, reading v. 2.

4. Some theologians and believers do not believe that God interacts directly with the world and humans. How does this verse show that God is actively involved with the world today and where else in the Bible does it display God's power over nature?

5. In what way have you experienced God's power over nature and what implications does it have for you today?

### Over Political Systems

6. Read Matthew 28:4 & 15. In which way did the Resurrection, and thereby God's power, influence the political system of the day (i.e. 1st Century Palestine)?



7. 1st Century soldiers were normally battle hardened and trustworthy, with little being able to scare them. How does their reaction in v. 4 show the awesomeness of God's power? Discuss in the group

8. Read v. 15 again. In which way did the Resurrection influence the political leaders of the day? What did the Resurrection drive them to do? Explain your answer

9. In today's mixed-up political systems worldwide, how has God's demonstration of power given you hope?

## Over Death

Read Matthew 27:51-53; 28:7 and Acts 2:24

10. Especially today where many of us have lost, or know of someone who has lost a loved one, know the finality of death. Explain how the above verses change your view of death?

11. Read 1 Corinthians 15:54-57. How does Paul explain the power of the Resurrection over death? How should we consider death as believers? Discuss in the group

12. Could you discuss in the group how God power over death has influenced your life?

## Over Sin

Read Matthew 9:6 and 28:18

13. Even before Christ's death and resurrection, He had authority over sin, but how does the above verses demonstrate that power? Discuss in the group



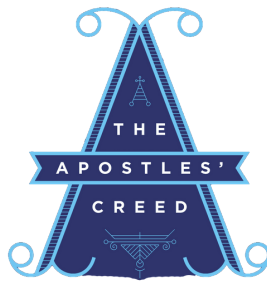
14. How have you experienced Christ's power over sin in your own life? Discuss in the group

## Conclusion

15. What have you gained from the sermon that has impacted you deeply?

16. After watching the sermon, what is the one thing which you can/will/should do in response to the message you heard today?





## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



**In the Ascension**

**Nov 1**

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty.

I'm taking a guess here, but it's probably a fairly accurate guess, I am assuming you've not heard many sermons specifically on the Ascension of Jesus. You're probably never celebrated Ascension Day, probably didn't even know it was a real event on the church calendar, probably are googling it right now to see if I am being serious and now realize it's on May 13, 2021. You've most likely not spent much of your personal life sitting and reflecting on the Ascension of Christ, what it means for Christ, what it means for you, what it means for the Church. In fact, you probably find it a bit strange that the Apostles' Creed, with its limited space, chose to include, "He ascended into heaven."

It is the neglected doctrine of the church today and yet, Jesus foretold it, Luke described it, Paul celebrates it, and Hebrews applies it to us, and the early church dogmatically clung to it as a source of hope and joy. It stands to reason that we too should revisit the day Jesus ascended to the Father. We too should consider the implications of that event. And we too should respond in worship and joy over a risen Savior who lives in heaven ready to make intercession for us.

Revisiting the Ascension with you,

Pastor TJ



*He ascended into heaven;*

Read Acts 1:1-11 and Luke 24:44-53

### Ice Breaker

1. Share with the group one of your most difficult goodbyes (either through relocation or death).
2. How do you think you would have felt at Jesus' ascension?

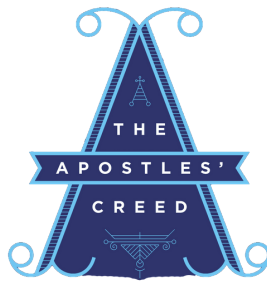
### Empowerment

3. What mission does the ascension give to the church?
4. What specific ways are you seeking to fulfill this mission?
5. How does the ascension empower the church to complete this mission?
6. Share with the group a time you felt the power of the Holy Spirit in Christian witness.
7. Discuss with your small group the possibility of hosting an evangelistic Christmas Party (Christmas in a Box) or some other outreach event.

### Christ Exalted

Read Ephesians 1:20-23

8. "The ascension gives you a commander in Heaven who sees the battlefield and moves you accordingly." Why has Jesus placed you in your city and workplace and how does His ascension give you confidence to serve where He has placed



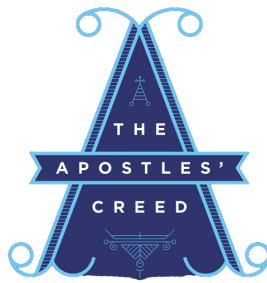
9. Why does it matter that we understand Jesus is in heaven with great glory (Hebrews 1:3)?
10. How do we daily behold the glory of Jesus (Hebrews 12:2, 2 Cor. 3:18)?
11. How does Jesus' ascension enable us to continue in the mission despite great hardship and rejection?

## Reunification

12. How did the ascension change Jesus' ability to interact with creation?
13. Several examples were given of people who fellowshiped with the ascended Jesus, give some examples of how YOU fellowship with Him.
14. Read Ephesians 2:4-6 and Hebrews 12:22-24. How should this truth reshape how we live?
15. How does Jesus' ascension reunite heaven and earth and how can we be sure we are joined to Him in heaven?

## Conclusion

16. What is one thing you will do in response to today's study? (Command to obey, Promise to receive, Example to follow, Sin to confess, Truth to believe)



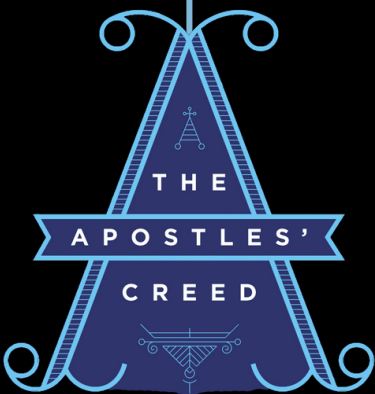
## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





In The Judgment

Nov 8

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Though tested with time, the Apostles' Creed has a few controversial places of debate.

I believe in the holy catholic church? Of course, this is easily cleared up by saying catholic means universal church, not the Catholic church.

I believe Jesus descended into hell? And again, this is easily cleared up by saying a few things: Firstly, that hell here refers to Sheol, the realm of the dead. And secondly, that Jesus' descent into hell was not the tortures of the flames of hell but Jesus, on the cross, felt like a soul in hell, away from the presence of God...My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.

The third difficult part of the creed, especially among Christians today, is not so easily cleared up because it is not a misunderstanding of words but a reluctance to believe what the Bible actually teaches.

I believe that Jesus is coming to judge the living and the dead?

Really? But didn't Jesus say, "Judge not?" Isn't Jesus all about love? How could we possibly believe that Jesus will come to JUDGE us? Even more outlandish, how can we believe that Jesus will come to bring punishment upon those who do not accept Him as Lord? You mean He will judge Gandhi and scores of other great men and women who did so much good in this world? Surely not!

You may not like it, but you can't deny the Biblical teaching on Judgment. EVERY New Testament author; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and the author of Hebrews ALL mention the Judgment of Jesus in their writings.

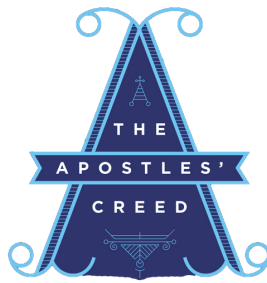
So, this weekend we will discuss the Judgment of Jesus in hopes of loving it and longing for it the way we love and long for justice in our own lives and communities.

Judgment, after all, is the desperate cry of humanity. It's the cry heard against police brutality in Nigeria. It's the cry heard against child abuse in Ohio. It's the cry heard against human trafficking in Thailand. It's the cry heard against the evil acts of terrorists in Nice, France.

We all love and long for justice. We all want sin judged, just not our own sin or the sins of those closest to us. But in Jesus, we get a loving, righteous judge that we can TRUST to do the right thing for all parties involved (The sinner, the sinned against, the Savior).

Loving and Longing with you,

Pastor TJ



*He ascended into heaven;*

Read Matthew 25:31-26:2

### Ice Breaker

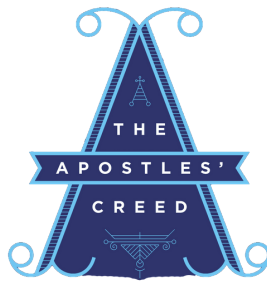
1. How do you feel about the idea of judgment?
2. Several examples of judgment in the Bible were mentioned in the sermon introduction, can you think of others?

### Day of Judgment

3. What are some ways we can “wake up” or “be ready” for the Day of Judgment?
4. Give some examples of justice you long to see become reality.
5. Why does Jesus describe The Day of Judgment as a glorious event and how can we as Christians both magnify the gains and mourn the losses of that day?

### Man of Judgment

6. How does looking to Jesus as judge give you comfort that the Day of Judgment will be done rightly?
7. What gives Jesus the “right” to judge others and by what standard should/will He judge the world?
8. Take some time to discuss the shepherd theme in Jesus’ discourse on judgment (see also Ezekiel 34).



*He ascended into heaven;*

## People of Judgment

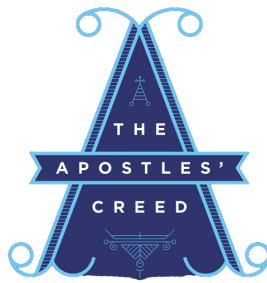
9. Many people have this idea that each person will be judged based on their own faith system; discuss how this worldview is vastly different from how the Bible describes judgment.
10. Can you know for certain that you are a sheep or goat? Give Biblical support.
11. Give a clear answer to what it means to be declared righteous.

## Result of Judgment

12. Compare the two destinations of the sheep and goats and discuss how faith in Jesus isn't just a movement away from hell, but also a movement toward God.
13. Hell is described as destruction, punishment and banishment. What do each of these teach us about God and our eternal destiny?
14. Take some time to discuss what eternity will be like for Jesus' followers.

## Conclusion

15. What is one thing you will do in response to today's study? (Command to obey, Promise to receive, Example to follow, Sin to confess, Truth to believe)



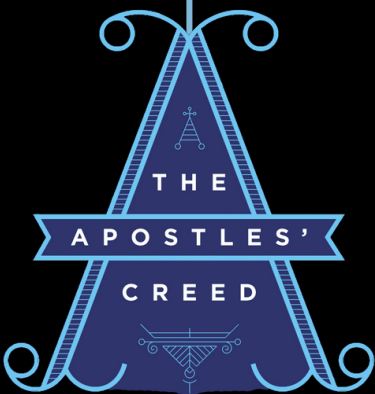
## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





**In The Holy Spirit**

**Nov 15**

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

Nowhere in the church is there a more controversial, more misunderstood, more misrepresented, more neglected (in practice) topic than that of the Holy Spirit. Scores of books from various theological perspectives have been written on the subject. Take, for example, Abraham Kuyper's 600-page "CONCISE Works of the Holy Spirit." 600 pages! I'd hate to read his EXTENDED Works of the Holy Spirit. So it's a bit disappointing that the Apostles' Creed has only ONE sentence on the Holy Spirit. It's even more disappointing that the sentence only says, "I believe." Of course, this is primarily due to the fact that ancient heresies didn't typically arise concerning the Holy Spirit.

It is a bit misleading to say that the Apostles' Creed only says, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." Remember the Creed should be seen as three sections. Section one, God the Father. Section two, God the Son. Section three, God the Spirit. So the Creed goes on to speak of the church, communion of Saints, forgiveness of sin, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting, all of which are works of the Spirit that the Creed points to indirectly. That being said, if the Creed was written today, I am certain it would say MUCH more.

In matters of the Spirit, where the Creed is silent, the Bible shouts! We need but sit and read and believe and then begin to live out the truths found in Scripture. There are two great dangers we should avoid when coming to the topic of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the Holy Spirit, we must never allow our experiences to influence how we interpret Scripture. This goes for the cessationist as well as the continuationist. The cessationist might say, "I've never experienced this, so it must not be true," regardless of what Scripture teaches. The continuationist might say, "I have experienced it, so it must be true," regardless of what Scripture teaches. Both are wrong approaches!

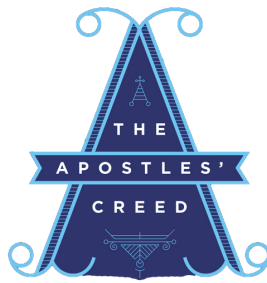
Secondly, we should not be satisfied with something less than what is offered in Scripture. I have my theology is that is enough. I have the seal of the Spirit and that is enough. I have joy in the Spirit and that is enough. No, it is not enough. Jesus did not give us a portion of the Spirit but all of the Spirit and we should not settle for breadcrumbs when the Father has invited us to a feast.

The Holy Spirit comes to encourage, comfort, strengthen, empower, console, counsel, intercede, guide, teach, convict, reprove, and exhort. But most importantly, God the Spirit, whom the Father has sent to us at the request of the Son, comes to, as Jesus puts it, dwell in us and make His home among us. As we read the Bible, we conclude that we are desperately dependent upon the Holy Spirit and must desire to live life under His influence and in His presence.

May it not be said of us that we have veered to the right or the left but that we have gone down the straight path in full fellowship with God the Spirit as revealed in Scripture.

Desiring to live under His influence and in His presence with you,

Pastor TJ



*I believe in the Holy Spirit*

Read John 14:18-26

### Ice Breaker

1. What are common truths all Christians believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

### A Gift

2. Give examples from both the Old and New Testament of people who received the gift of the Holy Spirit and how they (and others) knew they had received that gift. How does that relate to us today?
3. Share with the group your personal experience with the Holy Spirit.
4. What are some common ways people ignore or diminish the gift of the Holy Spirit?
5. How does Jesus' promise, "He (the Spirit) will be with you forever," give you hope and confidence?

### A Guide

6. Share with the group some specific ways the Holy Spirit has acted as your "Paraclete".
7. Why do you think people so often come to the Holy Spirit as a last resort and how can we avoid doing that in the future?
8. Share with the group a time when the Holy Spirit overwhelmed you with a love for Jesus (spotlight ministry).



## *I believe in the Holy Spirit*

9. What specific work of the Holy Spirit do you most need this week? Spend some time in prayer for one another concerning each person's answer.

### **God**

10. Which evidences are we able to draw from Scripture which shows that the Holy Spirit is God and why does it matter?

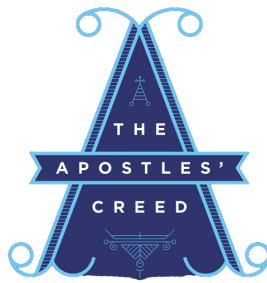
11. What are some ways we can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit (Person)?

12. Discuss the difference between knowing about the Holy Spirit and knowing the Holy Spirit (Personal). How have you known Him recently?

13. Are there any rooms in your house (John 14:23) that are off limits to the Holy Spirit?

### **Going Deeper**

14. How can we be more open to the filling and baptism of the Holy Spirit?



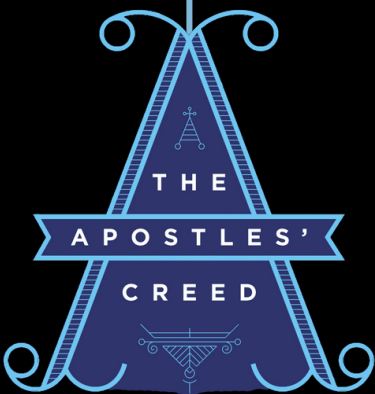
## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports





In The Holy Catholic Church

Nov 22

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

"I believe in the holy catholic Church."

Some would say that the one institution that has done the most harm in this world is the Church. It has caused war and division and oppression. It is full of hypocrites who exclude, and judge, and hate. Karl Marx once called religion "The opium of the masses."

Perhaps you can resonate with the sentiments. Perhaps you have been hurt by the Church. Perhaps you have turned off of God by the Church. Perhaps your slide toward atheism was sped along by the Church.

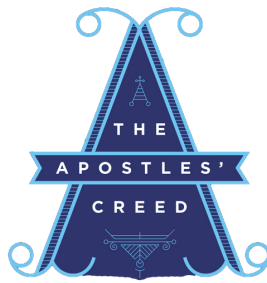
And yet others would say that the Church is the one institution that has done the greatest good in this world. It has built hospitals, schools, and job training centers. It has lifted whole communities out of poverty. It has defended the dignity of women, minorities, and the disabled when society sought to not only oppress them but put them to death. Even noted atheist Richard Dawkins once wrote, "I have mixed feelings about the decline of Christianity, in so far as Christianity might be a bulwark against something worse."

So what should we think of the Church? The Bible is clear. She is a mess, but a beautiful mess. Christ died to redeem the Church. Christ empowers the Church. Christ loves the Church. Christ clothes her blemishes with His beauty!

When functioning rightly in all her respective parts, the Church is Christ's city set on a hill to draw all men to Himself, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it! May City Church be all that Christ calls her to be as YOU seek to be the Church.

Being the Church with you,

Pastor TJ



*I believe in the holy catholic Church*

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7

### Ice Breaker

1. What is it that you love about your church?
2. What are some of the experiences which impacted you about a church?

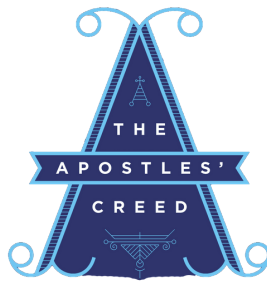
### Equipped by Elders

3. According to the passage, what role does an elder serve within the church?
4. What is the importance of this role for the church as a whole?
5. What are some of the ways you could encourage your elders at City Church?

Read 1 Timothy 3:8-13

### Caring Servant-Deacons

6. In which way does the role of a deacon differ from that of an elder in your understanding?
7. Can you think of a person who fits the role of a deacon and why?
8. Look at 1 Corinthians 13. How does this influence your interpretation of caring leadership within the church?
9. What are some things which the elders or deacons can do to serve you and your small group?



*I believe in the holy catholic Church*

10. Write these suggestions down and send them to the church at [citychurch@bicf.org](mailto:citychurch@bicf.org)

Read 1 Timothy 3:14

### **Secured by Scripture**

11. What are some of the ways that City Church services are grounded upon Scripture?

12. In which way does v. 14 show that the preceding verses are to be considered Scripture?

Read 1 Timothy 3:15 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

### **Built up by the Body**

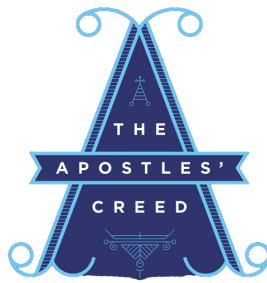
13. What spiritual gifts have the Holy Spirit given you and how are you using them to edify the Body of Christ through your local church?

14. Even though many of us are not elders or deacons within the church, how does this passage apply to how we ought to live and behave within our community?

15. How could you apply 1 Corinthians 13 to your life in order to live our lives as implied by 1 Timothy 3

### **Witness in the World**

16. What are some of the ways that you can be a witness this week, or some upcoming events during which you can be evangelistic?



*I believe in the holy catholic Church*

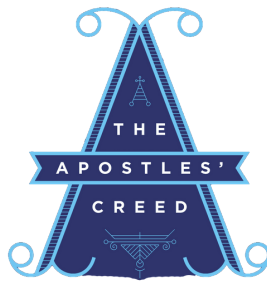
17. Describe what impact the church would have on the world should we live strictly according to the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3 and 1 Corinthians 13

### **Christ Centered**

18. What does v. 16 reveal about the importance of the centrality of Christ to the church?

19. What does it look like for a church to be centered around Christ and what does it look like for a church not to be centered around Christ?





## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports



# In The Forgiveness of Sins

Nov 29

# BELIEF

A Study of the Apostles' Creed

I believe in the forgiveness of sin.

We can learn a lot from these seven words. Firstly, we come to understand that there is such a thing as sin. Secondly, because sin requires forgiveness, we discover that sin is no light matter. When you get someone a great present you don't say, "forgive me." When you do a nice unexpected deed for another you don't follow that kind deed with the words, "forgive me." No, good deeds don't require forgiveness...bad deeds do. Therefore we can infer that sin is an offense against someone else that is so bad that it requires action on our part. David, in the Psalms, reminds us of the object of our sin: "Against You (God), and You alone have I sinned."

To sin against another human is bad. To sin against a holy and good God is infinitely bad. This puts us in a precarious position, which is why the third truth of this creed brings so much relief. Thirdly, the Bible teaches us that forgiveness for sin is not some unattainable idea. The Creed, taken from the plain reading of Scripture, does not say, I believe in sin, but I believe in the FORGIVENESS of sin. In other words, God has made a way for our offenses against Him to be pardoned. And to this we all rejoice!

Lastly, there is a personal nature about this statement. I, not you or someone else, but I believe that MY sins are forgiven. I believe that I am a sinner. I have sinned against a good and holy God. My actions deserve punishment. I must come to you in a humble state of forgiveness and confess my wrong actions. And I am assured, I BELIEVE, that MY sins are forgiven in Jesus' name.

The Gospel is good news precisely because in Jesus MY (and all those who call on the name of Jesus) sins are forgiven.

Confessing with you,

Pastor TJ



*I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins*

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

### Ice Breaker

1. How do we usually react when someone wrongs us? Discuss in the group

### God is Holy and without sin

2. Consider v. 5 which states that God is light. Give examples from the Old Testament, New Testament, and particularly John's Gospel to help explain what 'God is light' means.

3. Read the later part of v. 5, '...and there is no darkness in Him at all.' Discuss how God is completely good without any sin or evil in Him (be sure to include personal examples of His goodness in your own life).

### Sin separates us from God

Read 1 John 1:6

4. What is sin?

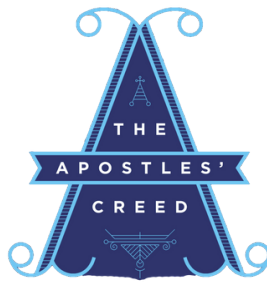
5. In which way does this sin keep us from being in fellowship with God?

6. Why MUST sin be punished? Why can't God simply overlook or ignore our sin?

### We are all sinners

Read 1 John 1:8, 10

63 7. What is the difference between v. 8 & 10 (no sin, not sinned)?



*I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins*

8. What sins does our current culture not define as sin?

9. How does God's holiness (light) help reveal sin in us? Give examples both in and outside the Bible.

### **Jesus is a Propitiation**

Read 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2

10. What does it mean that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins?

11. In which way does Jesus represent us before God and His holiness?

12. What should be the proper response to Jesus' death on the cross?

13 Read 2:2, why is it important to know that Jesus' death is for the whole world?

### **Forgiveness of Sins**

Read 1 John 1:9

14. What does true confession look like?

15. How can God forgive sin without corrupting His justice?

16. Share a time when you felt the overwhelming forgiveness of God in Jesus.





## Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

### Prayer Requests

### Praise Reports