

I Believe

The Apostle's Creed, the earliest creed, is a document used in liturgical forms of worship since just a few decades after the church began. It was first used to instruct new converts as to what we might believe about God, from the Trinity, to God as creator of the universe, to the virgin birth of Jesus, his resurrection, and the eternal life of all who believe in Christ as Savior.

It begins simply. I believe.

We all seek something or someone to believe in. This longing, this innate need was described by the monk Augustine when he said, "Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in God."

We can believe in fairy tales, but they are not real. Because we believe does not make them real, but they can shape our ways of thinking and living.

We might say that we believe in democracy. We can believe in it and participate, or we can not vote and just believe that we can. Believing in things in this word is a partial form of belief, a matter of the intellect.

But believing in God transforms us. When Christians say I believe, we are really saying that we are believing into God. We are answering the call of a living, eternal entity, and entering into a new relationship that is better than all worldly interaction and lasts forever.

Every time we say the words, I believe, we are proclaiming something that has been true for centuries. The details beyond that belief take us into a world which is greater than anything we could ever imagine.

Sadly, the Apostles' Creed and all that it entails has been set aside for a more limited God in today's world. We need to know a God who is everywhere, for whom nothing is impossible, and who calls us to a mission greater than our own thoughts and desires.

Church has become an option for many, and our society reflects it. Morality is equal to, or worse than the state of the Roman Empire just before it fell. Sin is rampant, religion is laughed at, and God is in the background.

The Apostle's Creed provides balance for a world which badly needs it. When a college professor denies the virgin birth, we who know that Jesus was born of a virgin and walk with him must know what he does not. When someone says that the earth came spontaneously into being, we must be reassured by the familiar words of the creed, based in scripture, that God is indeed creator of heaven and earth.

When we think that anything goes, and watch while it does, we are reminded of the words we believe. Jesus sits at the right hand of God, and will come again to judge the world one day.

But the meat of the matter comes toward the end of the document. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the churches of past, present and future, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

We must believe all these things. We must resist anyone who comes with a supposedly brand new idea that they don't even know is not true. And we must live a life which is commensurate with the reality that all of these things are true.

But the most important ingredient of the Apostles' Creed is this. We walk with the eternal God it describes. We are in a relationship with the eternal Christ forever. This means that no matter what happens in the world, we will have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we say the Apostles' Creed as a child, we are being instructed in the wonders of God. If we have said it for twenty years, we have said to God one thousand times that we believe in him and all that he is, and have been blessed by an incredible relationship. If we have said it since we were a child and now approach seventy, let's say sixty years of Sundays, we have said it three thousand times and know the God described in it intimately.

The creed, as we unpack every vital phrase, lifts up the basic beliefs of the Christian. In the act of repeating it together, we begin to uncover the wows and miracles God has done in the past and makes possible today.

Paul the Apostle, wrote to the Hebrews that "without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Thomas the Apostle said to the risen Jesus, "My

Lord and My God!” Peter the Apostle heard Jesus say that he was a rock and on him he would build his church.

Affirming our faith in the totality of God is a life-affirming and soul growing experience. Every time we say together the familiar words of the Apostles Creed, we see God move mountains, save souls, and create a new world once again.