



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

Creed

Introduction

Small Group Discussion Resource

This week we are starting a short series called “Creed”, based on the Apostle’s Creed. As a teaching team we are aware of the pressure of prevailing cultural trends that weaken our conviction about our core beliefs as Christians. As a result we felt it would be helpful for us to begin the year by digging deep into some doctrinal themes.

1. Spend a few moments praying that God would impact both your mind and your heart as you discuss these themes.
2. In the message, Laird asked this question - *If you and I were sitting down over coffee, and I asked you – tell me what you believe about your faith, and why, where would you start and where would you finish. How would you go about organizing your core theological convictions and communicate that in a coherent way that would make sense?* How did/would you respond to these questions?
3. The word creed basically means – a set of beliefs that guides a person’s values and drives their behaviours. It is a Latin word which simply means – “I believe”. So, in many ways a creed is a confession of faith. Were you raised in a “creedal” type church or is this kind of expression new to you?
4. As a group, read the apostle’s creed out loud together.

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.

5. What is your initial impression when you read and reflect upon this creed? How is the creed like a newspaper or compass? (hope you were listening well to the message!)
6. Reflect on and discuss the 3 caveats presented in the message:
 - At The campus we do not teach creeds, we teach the Bible. Creeds are to be reflective of Biblical truth, but cannot claim authority as Bible passages can.
 - Just reciting a creed does not make you a Christian.
 - Every Christian needs to be a theologian.
7. What would you say to someone who says – *I don't need doctrine, I just need Jesus.*
8. In the message 3 reasons were given as to why theological reflection is essential. Discuss these reasons together.
 - What you think about the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is the most important thing about you.
 - The person who has a right concept of God is relieved of 10,000 temporal problems.
 - Our society has lost its way and far too often the church is walking in ignorance.

9. Reflect on what J.I Packer says,

Today, on our own turf, we face pagan ignorance about God every bit as deep as that which the early church faced in the Roman Empire. The ABC approach [to explaining the gospel] is thus not full enough; the whole story of the Father's Christ-exalting plan of redeeming love, from eternity to eternity, must be told, or the radical reorientation of life for which the gospel calls will not be understood, and the required total shift from man-centeredness to God-centeredness, and more specifically from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness, will not take place. All that the Creed covers needs to be grasped and taught, as an integral part of the message of the saving love of God. (J. I. Packer, Affirming the Apostles' Creed)

10. Read 2 Timothy 1:8-14 together. What jumps out of this passage to you about the importance of clear thinking and conviction?

⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. ¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2 Timothy 1:8-14

11. Reflect on these statements:

- *It's not the amount of faith that matters; it's the object of faith that makes all the difference.*
- *There is little value in theological discussion unless it draws us closer to God relationally. Good theology integrates both the head and the heart.*

12. Personally, how have you/do you develop theological conviction? Reflect on this quote from Josh McDowell - *Having convictions is being so thoroughly convinced that something is absolutely true that you take a stand for it regardless of the consequences. Our faith must be grounded in the objective truth and relational meaning of the things we believe. (Josh McDowell)*

12. Read and reflect upon Romans 10:9-11

if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME." Romans 10:9-10 (NASB)

Discuss the symmetry between belief and confession.

13. *I believe.* These two words are among the most explosive words any human can utter. Discuss your thoughts about this statement.

14. Spend some time praying together. But before you do, why not read this creed together aloud again.

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