

ENGAGING THE HEART

What Do You Believe?

Matt Heard, Senior Pastor

Part 13: Getting Together

Acts 2:42

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.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into 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, universal Church;

the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

"I believe." As we began learning last fall, it's a phrase we use in so many areas of our lives, from opinions about the outcome of athletic events to our relationship with God; from things of little consequence or importance to matters of great and eternal significance.

In this series we have acknowledged, when it comes to faith, that the most important element is the *object* of our faith. The amount of faith we have is significant, but only after we have determined the trustworthiness of the object of our faith.

The Apostles' Creed is an important resource for those pursuing ultimate realities because it is a summary of the Object of our spiritual faith. It is a summary of what the Bible teaches, a summary of essential Truth about who God is and His activity in this world—specifically His work of amazing grace on our behalf. Authentic followers of Christ of all cultures and generations hold these convictions in common.

We have examined what authentic belief looks like: it involves the *mind* (recognition of the Truth about the Object of my faith); the *emotions* (embracing the relevance of the Object of my faith to my need); and the *will* (actually relying on God with my actions). In other words, my entire being, my whole heart is to be engaged in my faith walk with God!

We also looked at the question, "In a world of so much pain and so little time, why study such an old document like *The Apostles' Creed*?" As our society casts away more and more of its reference points and restraints, the fangs of sin and its effects are more exposed. The result is people who are in great pain and need. So we tend to think the priority is our need for comfort and freedom from our sin, etc., rather than Truth. What we forget is that for us to receive the comfort and the freedom, we must drink from the well of Truth!

Having reflected on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we now turn our attention to the church. Today, as we examine the phrase, the *communion of saints*, we will look even more specifically at what happens when the church gathers, what happens when followers of Christ "commune"—or fellowship—with each other.

Four results when Christ-followers devote themselves to authentic fellowship:

1. _____
 - ❖ *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...* [Romans 15:7]
 - ❖ *Offer hospitality to one another...* [1 Peter 4:9]
 - ❖ *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* [Colossians 3:13]
2. _____
 - ❖ *Bear one another's burdens...* [Galatians 6:2 NASB]
 - ❖ *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.* [Galatians 4:32 NASB]
 - ❖ *Therefore comfort one another...* [1 Thessalonians 4:18 NASB]
3. _____
 - ❖ *... serve one another in love.* [Galatians 5:13]
 - ❖ *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.* [Romans 12:10]
 - ❖ *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.* [Philippians 2:3 NASB]
 - ❖ *This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.* [1 Jn 3:11]
4. _____
 - ❖ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.* [Hebrews 10:24]
 - ❖ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another...* [Colossians 3:16]
 - ❖ *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...* [1 Thessalonians 5:11]
 - ❖ *So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.* [Romans 14:19 NASB]