

NOVEMBER 15 & 16, 2003

ENGAGING THE HEART

What Do You Believe?

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Part 5: Uniquely Jesus Matthew 16:15-17

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;

He descended to hell. 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 have learned, 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 a very 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 ages 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 my faith's Object 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., not 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 the Father, today we will turn our attention to God the Son, Jesus Christ. Is Jesus just one of the many options on the religious smorgasbord, or is He the only way to God? Our ancestors in the faith expressed it this way: "*I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord...*"

An authentic follower of Jesus Christ believes in three aspects of who He is:

1. Jesus is the _____ to the Father ("Christ").

2. Jesus is the _____ to the Father ("only Son").

3. Jesus is the _____ to the Father ("Lord").