

Creed (1): I Believe in God the Father

(Psalm 19:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. Last Sunday, a lone gunman walked into First Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, TX
1. He killed 26 people, almost half of them children; one family lost 8 family members
 - a. The pastor's wife, who was out of town but lost her 14-year old daughter said—
“*Most of our church family is gone now— our building is probably beyond repair.*”
 - b. They've since decided to tear the building down and completely relocate the church
 - c. Everyone in Sutherland Springs knew someone killed; 4% of the population died
 2. Obviously, I'm not suggesting here every atheist will ever become a mass murderer
 - a. And not every Christians does such a hot job living out Jesus' “*love thy neighbor*”
 - b. But it is worth noting that the killer, Devin Patrick Kelley, was a very vocal atheist
 - 1) Former classmates describe him aggressively/constantly spewing his non-belief
 - 2) Facebook friends got tired of his “un-evangelism” and they un-friended him
 - c. Was Kelley insane? It is easy to think so, but he was clearly unhappy and miserable
 - 1) He lived his life with no sense of the supernatural— with no hope or peace
 - 2) His anger and rage at the world came out that evil and diabolic act last Sunday
 3. **Point:** What we believe about the world impacts what we do—*our beliefs do matter*
 - a. Kelly thought there's nothing in the world except the world... *nothing here for him*
 - b. That beliefs mattered, and innocent victims paid the price for his twisted beliefs

B. Today were begin a new series of studies— “*Creed: What Christians Believe and Why*”

1. For some of us, the word “creed” is a bad word—we go by the Bible, and not a creed.
 - a. Our credo was “*We speak where Bible speaks and silent where Bible is silent.*”
 - b. But you see, that's a creed... and enough of me trying to being a smart aleck!
2. The roots of Churches of Christ are “restoration movement” to unite all believers
 - a. We saw denominational “creeds” as church manuals that kept believers divided
 - 1) Our appeal was to abandon your church creeds and unite on the Bible alone
 - 2) Honestly, we've found “*unwritten creeds*” to be as divisive as written ones!
3. The word “*creed*” is from the Latin word “*credo,*” which simply means “*I believe.*”
 - a. The earliest of the creeds served as a simple statement of belief for early believers
 - b. We have a “*statement of belief*” on web site to let people know “*what we believe*”
 - c. The earliest such statement of belief for the early church was “*the Apostles' Creed*”

4. Bulletin article gives a summary of the Apostles' Creed—read it sometime (*not now!*)
 - a. It sums up what Christians believe. There are 3 sections, the longest is about Christ

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of Father.
He will come again 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 life everlasting. Amen.
5. As the article explains, a purpose of creed to as a memory device (not everyone read)
 - a. People could remember these 100 or so words as a basic outline of Christian faith
 - b. But it's just an outline; the devil is in the details, or in this case, God is in the details
 - 1) One quick word: "*holy catholic church,*" is talking about "*universal church*"
 - 2) That reminded believer they're tied to all Christians, not just their little bunch
 - c. Over next 6 weeks, we're going to use this ancient outline call "*Apostles Creed*"

II. Creed: I Believe in God the Father

- A. The Apostles Creed begins, "*I believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth*"
 1. At one time or another, we all act like we think we're the center of the universe
 - a. We think our feelings matter most, right? Our opinions are more right, right?
 - b. Old Saying, "*People who think they know everything annoy those of us who do!*"
 - c. In more reflective moments, we know we aren't always the center of the universe
 2. That where the Apostles Creed begins— "*I'm not ever the center of the universe*"
 - a. Neither are you. And collectively neither are we together. Only ONE is the center.
 - b. Francis Chan reminds us of that in this old video clip (*he still had hair!*) ([VIDEO](#))
- B. **Point:** Our God created all that! He spoke all of it into being! Every star, every galaxy!
 1. Why? If all God wanted was to create us, why bother with all that star dust stuff?
 - a. What if God needed people to worship Him... or was lonely and wanted company?
 - b. Could not have God just have created earth so He could just create Adam and Eve?
 2. But no— God was so AWESOME that His creation had to be as well ([Psalm 19:1-2](#))
 - a. David was probably a shepherd boy looking at night sky, strumming on a lyre.
 - b. He didn't have a telescope, just a lyre— he had no idea just how RIGHT he was!
 - 1) There was so much more about God's glory that the skies were proclaiming
 - 2) There are things about the glory of God in creation that we haven't discovered

3. God knew we'd look up at sky and wonder— so He gave us plenty of wonder about
 - a. David saw only this (stars); God knew we would be able to see this (NASA stars)
 - 1) He wanted you to be as blown away by his awesomeness and glory as David
 - 2) He created stuff David would never see or even imagine that blows us away
 - b. God proclaims Himself to us through His creation (**Isaiah 40:21-22, 25-26**)
 - 1) We see the stars, the mountains, the seas, the sunset and they point us to God
 - 2) Sadly, most often they don't. We just come to take those things for granted
 4. Philip Yancey gives an example of how we take God's power/presence for granted
 - a. He lives in Colorado; den has a picture window with wall-size view of Rockies
 - 1) He tells of meeting someone at the door and them following him through house
 - 2) After awhile, he was aware they no longer followed—they stopped at window
 - b. They were absolute awe by the view of the mountains outside his den window
 - 1) He took the view for granted and it had lost magic (*paid a lot of money for it*)
 - 2) Do we see the stars, sunsets, and mountains and miss the God who made them?
- C. Isaiah's career as a prophet began with this famous vision of God (**Isaiah 6:1-4**)
1. What Isaiah sees is the Lord high and exalted, His robe filling the temple
 - a. The angelic seraphs fly above one on throne, covering their faces and their feet (*You didn't show a great king your face or your feet; you bow low and then back out of presence*)
 - b. The seraphs call out, "*Holy, holy, holy*" and their voices shook the entire temple
 2. That's impressive; it's easy for us to rush past the setup to get to this incredible vision
 - a. Isaiah begins with a date, "*In the year that King Uzziah died*" (740 BC) (**Isa 6:1**)
 - b. Isaiah is a collection of prophetic oracles; his book is not in chronological order
 - c. Why preface this awesome vision with something as mundane as a date?
 3. The isn't the date (740 BC) that King Uzziah died—most powerful of Judah's kings
 - a. Uzziah raised and equipped a large and powerful army (**2 Chron 26:11ff**)
 - 1) He built great war machines to be used by his archers (**2 Chron 26:15a**)
 - 2) He defeated the Philistines and exacted tribute from the Ammonites
 - 3) The fame of King Uzziah spread all the way to Egypt (**2 Chron 26:8**)
 - b. The death of King Uzziah was devastating—that's why he dates his it like that
 - 1) Before Isaiah could be a prophet, Isaiah had to see that God was on the throne
 - 2) Isaiah's faith had to be in God—not king or country or politics or power
 - 3) You know, I just wish every once in awhile some of this would apply to us!

4. The Jews saw Uzziah's throne and power so much more clearly than they saw God's
 - a. And we make the same mistake! If Isaiah wrote in our day and age, he might begin
 - 1) *"In year of the great recession..." "In the year the Twin Towers fell..."*
 - 2) *"In the year Hurricane Maria hit..." "the year of Vegas and Texas shooting"*
 - 3) Maybe more personally— *"In the year I got cancer" or "the year I lost my job"*
 - b. Principle is the same as with Isaiah, *"Who really is on the throne of the universe?"*
 - 1) We need to look up into the night sky and remember how great is our God!
 - 2) He still rules over all His creation as the Lord of all lords and King of all kinds
 - c. If I really see this God, I won't be so wowed or so worried by the things of the earth
 - 1) If my eyes are filled with God, I won't take myself or my wants so seriously
 - 2) I'll cry out with seraphs, *"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty..."*

III. Conclusion

- A. Go back to Isaiah's vision of God—what does he do when he sees God (**Isa 6:5**)
 1. When he sees God's awesome majesty, he is driven to his knees in humility
 - a. We started talking about people who see themselves as center of universe
 - b. If you ever see really see God, you know that you are not the center of anything
 2. When we see God's power, what you really see is your own weakness and failing
 - a. When we see God's holiness, we see our own sinfulness and brokenness
 - b. When we really and truly see God, we also see how much we need Him!
- B. You might say, *"I've never had a vision at all; I've never seen God like Isaiah"*
 1. No? Tonight, go outside and look up and listen as stars testify (**Psa 19:3-4**)
 - a. The heavens are speaking, they are declaring the greatness and glory of God
 - b. If you really believe God created that, then WOW! *How big God must be*
 - c. And when you pray and praise, you are speaking to an awesome God !
 2. Moses reminded Israel that while God made stars, he chose us (**Deut 10:14-15**)
 - a. God could have stars and solar systems, but what he really wants is YOU
 - b. God is so good and so loving that He has set his affection on you and me
 - c. God is great and all-powerful, and He is the Creator of heaven and earth
 3. God moved heaven and earth because more than heaven and earth—he loved you
- C. We believe in God, the creator of heaven and earth; He wants to be your savior today.