

Creed (2): I Believe in Jesus Christ His Son

I. Introduction

- A. We're see Christmas decorations, commercials, ads— must be time for Thanksgiving!
1. Can relate with turkey in cartoon. Each year, Christmas season seems to come earlier.
 - a. There's even a word that's been coined for this phenomenon— *Christmas Creep*
 - b. Just another way our commercial, consumerist culture's says, "*Show me the money*"
 2. I guess I'll add to "*Christmas Creep*" today by preaching what is an *Advent Sermon*
 - a. "*Advent Season*" doesn't really begin until Dec 3 (fourth Sunday before Christmas)
 - b. We don't use liturgical calendar; this is traditional ordering around coming of Christ
 - 1) It is marked by fasting, festivals and penitence— though not all at same time
 - 2) Each Sunday during Advent has NT and OT readings stressing Christ's coming
 3. OK, the N.T. never talks about Advent, so for the most part we don't either
 - a. But the Bible does talk about Christ's birth and what His coming or advent means
 - b. Maybe we've avoided Christmas to the point where we don't stress his birth/coming
 - 1) I didn't sing carols or hear sermon on Jesus' birth of Jesus at Christmas as kid
 - 2) Singing "*Silent Night*" in July seems silly; we skipped the birth of Jesus thing
- B. Today we're continuing our series entitled "*Creed: What Christian's Believe and Why*"
1. We're looking at the "Apostles Creed" as a summary statement of what we believe
 2. We stress how we are different from other believers; this is what we have in common
 - a. Our creedal statement today, "*I believe in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord...*"
 - b. The entire second section of the creed is on what we believe about Jesus Christ
 3. Let's say it together again. Remember, "catholic" just means "universal church"
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.
 4. There's way too much on Jesus here to cover in a sermon— so I'll focus on advent
 - a. I don't get to preach Christmas sermon (*we'll be off celebrating our 40th anniversary*)
 - b. It's a shame; Linda found me a great Christmas preaching suit— Todd can wear it!

II.I Believe in Jesus Christ His Son

- A. There are several NT texts that speak of Jesus's advent or his coming into our world
1. They sound strange, wonderful, and other-worldly (**Jn 1:1-3,14**, **1 Tim 3:16**, **Phil 2:7-8**)
 - a. These texts stress that Jesus came into our world—but then we all do that, right
 - 1) Entry of every baby into the world is dramatic; we speak of “miracle of birth”
 - 2) What made Christ's coming into world different was it wasn't His beginning
 - b. Texts stress Jesus existed before and then was born—that is reflected in the creed *I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,*
 - 1) “*In the beginning was the word, the word was God... the word became flesh*”
 - 2) “*Being in very nature God... taking on the very nature of a servant...*”
 2. The \$2 theological world that we use for this is the “incarnation.” God in the flesh
 - a. Jesus was as fully God as he could be while God could be living in the flesh
 - b. Our humanity imposed some limitations on some of his characteristics of God
 - 1) While he was in the flesh, he could not be everywhere at once, right? (**Mt 11:1**)
 - 2) While he knew more than mere mortals, he didn't know everything (**Mt 24:36**)
 - 3) While in the flesh, He “*learned obedience from what he suffered*” (**Heb 5:8**)
 - c. At the center of our faith is this baby in a manger, the nexus of deity & humanity
- B. It is right here where Christians must part company with many of our religious neighbors
1. It's not that Jesus isn't highly respected or venerated by other world religions. He is.
 - a. They see him as a great rabbi, honored prophet, holy man, and enlightened one.
 - b. I grew up in the sixties, an era of the counter-cultural “*Jesus Christ Superstar*”
 - c. On the other hand, many today see Jesus as fitting in the system (in Armani suit)
 2. What all are doing is seeing Jesus through the lens of their own culture & perspective
 - a. Apostles' Creed reminds us the Bible won't let us fit Jesus neatly into our world
 - b. The picture of Jesus in revealed in scripture is much more jarring and other worldly
 - c. He was “*conceived by Holy Spirit... born of virgin.*” This Jesus isn't of this world
 - 1) We can't simply fit this Jesus into the systems, structures and schemes of world
 - 2) To believe in Jesus, we must follow Him outside of this world and its values
 3. Jesus was God in the flesh; His own claim, “*I and the Father are one*” (**John 10:30**)
 - a. It is that we Christians lose our Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist friends
 - b. They respect Jesus, but to believe in him, you must believe what Bible says of Him
 - c. And what he says of himself, “*I am the way, truth, life... if you have seen me*” (**14:6**)
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- C. Looking at **Philippians 2**. When we say, “*I believe in Jesus*,” we’re saying quite a lot.
1. **First**, saying we believe the Christ whose name we wear the nature of God (**Phil 2:6**)
 - a. This is why Jesus says, “*If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father*” Same nature.
 - b. The Hebrew writer uses this equaling startling language to describe Jesus (**Heb 1:3**)
 - 1) The Babe of Bethlehem began his journey by stepping off the throne of heaven
 - 2) When we say, “*I believe in Jesus*,” we’re saying that we believe in that Jesus
 2. **Second**, we’re saying this God emptied Himself to become vulnerable (**Phil 2:7-8**)
 - a. God become flesh—born as a human baby to a virgin peasant and laid in manger
 - 1) Most dramatic event the world has known began in a most undramatic way
 - 2) He humbled himself not only at his birth, but every step he took along the way
 - b. Not only did he share the human experiences; he shared in THE experience, death
 - c. When we say that we believe in Jesus Christ, this is what we say that we believe
 3. **Third**, we’re saying we believe that Christ was raised and will come back (**2:9-11**)
 - a. The one who was on heaven’s throne is sitting once more—and there he reigns
 - b. The one who came to earth will return again—and this time every knee will bow
 - c. When we say that we believe in Jesus Christ, we are saying that this we believe!

III. Conclusion

- A. This is what we are mean when we say, “*I believe in Jesus Christ*.” But there’s more.
1. What we’ve seen so far in **Phil 2** isn’t Paul’s point—this it’s really Paul’s illustration
 - a. Point is that we need to be living out faith in real and visible ways (**Phil 2:3-5**)
 - 1) He is writing to a church struggling with getting along (*hard to imagine, right?*)
 - 2) So he points them to Jesus. *You believe in Jesus? Great! So live like it!*
 - 3) He was God and he gave up having his way about stuff—you do that then!
 - b. He comes back to that point after he gives them his example (**Phil 2:14-15**)
 2. Repeating the creed each week is pretty easy (*Maybe seems weird if not used to it*)
 - a. Point is not saying that you believe the right things. Point is not being not heretical.
 - b. Point is believing the right things so that you are led to live the right kind of life
- B. As Paul faced what he saw as certain death, he wrote this to Timothy (**2 Tim 1:12**)
1. Paul had confidence as he faced death. Why? His theology was right on Jesus?
 2. No! He knew Christ and was fully persuaded that Jesus had his back on that last day
 3. What about you? What do you believe about Jesus? Are you living what you believe?