



April 23, 2023

## OPENING QUESTION

**What do we mean when we say “believe in yourself?”**

What does it mean to *believe* something, or believe in something?

The Apostles’ Creed is a concise declaration of the Christian faith, an easy to memorize a confession of common belief. For centuries, it has helped people from all denominations of Christianity know and remember what they believe. Throughout the stories of the Bible, we can see how God’s people get into trouble (sin, injustice, captivity) when they forget who their God is and what He has done. We are no different; creeds help us to remember what we believe - not generically, but specifically - so that we remember Whose we are, and therefore who we are.

## DISCUSS

**What is the difference between *knowing* and *believing*?**

- If an outsider evaluated you on your actions alone, what would they say that you believe? (This doesn’t have to only include things we believe about our faith in God! If you’re stuck, think about your knowledge and beliefs around nutrition or exercise.)

As we begin to consider the Apostles’ Creed, take some moments as a group to read through the creed (at the right). Knowing that we’ll be looking at the whole thing in depth over the next four weeks, discuss:

- What confuses you or you feel unsure about (without judgment or the need to correct).
- What you confidently believe.
- What stands out to you about the structure or content.

This week, we’ll dig into the first section on God, the Father Almighty. There are verses below (detailed at the right) to help you consider these titles.

- What associations and descriptions come to mind when you hear Father?
- What associations and descriptions come to mind when you hear Almighty? (You may need to define that word as a group!)
- Do you find it hard or easy to *believe* that both things are always true about God?

**What actions in your daily life would reveal your belief in God as Father?**

- What actions would reveal your belief in His all-powerfulness?

**As a group, discuss what it means that God is the *Creator*.**

- How is God’s creating work similar to and different from our own creative works?
- What do Psalm 24:1, 19:1-4 and Revelation 4:11 add to your understanding of what it means that God is the Creator of heaven and earth?

**How is *knowing* that God is the Creator of heaven and earth different than *believing* He is the Creator?**

- What thoughts, attitudes, and actions might show up in your life if you *believe* God is our Creator?

## FROM THE MESSAGE

### DAILY TIME

John 1:1-18  
 Colossians 1:9-23  
 John 20:24-31  
 Psalm 110  
 Isaiah 61, Luke 4:16-21  
 Philippians 2:1-11

As you read each day, consider:

- What do these passages show me about God and His character?
- What do they highlight about what we **believe**?
- How can I ask God for help based on these verses?

### PARTNERSHIP CLASS

May 7 at Kentwood, 11:45 am  
[Encounterchurch.org/events](http://Encounterchurch.org/events)

### NOTES AND QUOTES

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.

God as Father:

- 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:14-16;  
 Psalm 103:13,  
 Psalm 68:5

God as Almighty

- Psalm 147:5, Jeremiah 32:27,  
 Psalm 115:3, Isaiah 14:24,  
 Daniel 4:34b-35

As we began this series studying the Apostles' Creed, Dirk talked about how a tool like the Creed keeps our belief broad and balanced.

As you read through the creed, what does it bring up that will help your perspective stay broader than our western, 21<sup>st</sup> century lenses?

- What areas of the creed will help to bring balance to your belief? In other words, in which areas do you feel like your understanding and belief are weaker?

Dirk gave several balanced pairs that help us to consider where our belief may have become unbalanced. For each of the following pairs, consider: which side is easier for you to lean toward, and how can you grow in your understanding and love of it's pair?

- Mighty Creator and merciful Father
- Infinitely above and intimately close
- Beyond comprehension and right there beside me

## **EXTRA** Genesis 1-2 OR Psalm 104

Where do you see God's Fatherliness in the passage? Where do you see His Almightyness?

## **CLOSE WITH PRAYER**

Pray for one another over the needs in your hearts and lives. Ask God to help you believe, and to help your life evidence your beliefs.

## **PRAYER AND CARE**

Reminders for the week ahead:

*1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

*Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

*Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.*

*Psalm 68:5 Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.*

*Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.*

*Jeremiah 32:27 "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?"*

*Psalm 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.*

*Isaiah 14:24 The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed,*

*so shall it stand,*

*Daniel 4:34b for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; 35 all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"*

*Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,*

*Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

*2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.*

*3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.*

*4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

*In them he has set a tent for the sun,*

*Revelation 4:11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."*