



The Creed

I love the Gospel verse that Divine Service One has us sing just before the reading of the Holy Gospel: ***“Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, Alleluia.”*** This, of course, is Peter’s response to Jesus after the difficult discussion which took place in John 6, and it fits so well with us each and every Sunday. Some days we know what our Lord Jesus is saying to us in the readings, some weeks it’s a little tougher for our sinful hearts and ears to hear, yet we are called to listen, and after listening, to respond. And the best response we can give is to confess exactly who our Lord is and what he has done for us. We confess the Creed!

The word, Creed, comes from the Latin, credo: ‘I believe.’ This is our confession of faith, of belief. We repeat back to God what he has revealed to us about Himself throughout all of Holy Scripture. We believe in God the Father who created us and all that is; we believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father who lived, suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation; we believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son to bring us the forgiveness of sins won by Jesus on the cross and distribute them in the Holy Christian Church on earth so that we may receive eternal life.

This is who we worship and adore: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet not three gods but One God in Three persons. Yes, it is a bit confusing, and that is why the creeds were written down for our learning and confessing! There is a logical tension that doesn’t fully make sense to us all the time in our human reason. How can three persons be one

God? When we try to reason it out we break the paradox, so we stop reasoning by simply confessing what we know and leave the rest to our Lord to explain to us in eternity. Hence, ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!”***

In these Creeds, Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian, we have the full summary of the Christian Faith. Each one describes who our God is as the great Three-in-One, but most importantly each creed describes what the Father has done for us, what the Son has accomplished for us, and what the Holy Spirit continues to deliver to us.

The Apostles’ is the oldest and shortest of the creeds (from about A.D. 150) and because of its brevity and age has been used as the Baptismal Creed, both for confession at Baptism and for memorization as a Christian of what our Faith is about. All Christians should know this creed by heart. The Nicene Creed (started in A.D. 325, completed in 381) expands upon the Apostles’ to make sure no one doubts Jesus was truly both God and man. The Athanasian Creed (from about the 5th century A.D.) goes one step further to make triply sure (note the number of times things are done in threes in this creed!) that no one confuses the persons nor denies that each person is God.

The real blessing of the creeds is not the descriptions of who God is, but what he has done for us! Our God is not a God who needs superlatives cast at Him to honour Him and please Him, but one who wants us to know everything He has accomplished for us and is even now preparing to give us in eternity! The creeds simply tell us what our Triune God has done for you and me!

No matter how the readings of any given Sunday go, whether they are the easy readings which are familiar and beloved by us, or the more difficult ones that make us scratch our heads and wonder, ‘What does this mean?’, the creeds unite us with centuries upon centuries of our Christian brothers and sisters who also stand before the throne of Almighty God. Together we confess the holy Christian Faith, what our God has done and continues to do for us: creating us, redeeming us, and sanctifying us for our journey home!

These creeds are most certainly a great treasure of the Church, and so we use them week by week for our confession and the building up of our Faith in our Triune God.



In Christ’s service,
Rev. Joel V. Kuhl, Pastor