THE CREED: I BELIEVE IN GOD the SON

Apr-Jun 2017

**about these notes**

Although I hope that they will be useful also to individuals, these notes are intended to assist disciple group leaders as they prepare to lead a session for their group. They will serve you best if you DO NOT SIMPLY SIT AND READ THEM TO YOUR GROUP. I am anticipating that the leader will look at them prayerfully in advance of the session, using them as a prompt or guide to your discussions according to the particular circumstances of your groups. I hope that they will prove useful as you invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper knowledge of what Jesus wants for your lives.

**Introduction to the series**

The Nicene Creed

**WE BELIEVE** in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.  
  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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| 14th May  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Gift-giving Spirit 1** | 21st May  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Gift-giving Spirit 2** | 28th May  **I believe in the Son:**  **Who ascended into heaven** | 4th June  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Who wants us to be filled** |
| 1 Corinthians 12:1-8 | Romans 12:3-8 | John 17:1-11 | John 7:37-9, Ephesians 5:18-20 |

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| 23rd April  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Life-giving Spirit** | 30th April  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Spirit of Truth** | 7th May  **I believe in the Holy Spirit:**  **Spirit of Unity** |
| Ezekiel 37, 1 Cor 15:35-end | John 15:26-7, 16:12-15 | Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13, John 17:20-23 |

6. The Son... who ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father

**John 17:1-11**

**15** After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed:

‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. **2**For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **3**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **4**I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. **5**And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

**Jesus prays for his disciples**

**6**‘I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. **7**Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. **8**For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. **9**I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. **10**All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. **11**I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

**GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED**

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the

questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

* How important do you think it is that Jesus ascended bodily to be with the Father?
* How often do you stop and consider the 'bigger picture' of life?

**Questions for your group**

James started his sermon this week by reflecting on his train journey to London. As he looked out of the window, he was captivated by the beautiful landscape all around, but when his eyes were drawn to the filth and grime on the windows, he could no longer appreciate the bigger picture.

* + **What 'grime' in the foreground stops you from being able to appreciate the incredible gifts that God has given us all to inspire us, motivate us and simply for us to enjoy?**
  + **How do we deal with all of this (the brokenness, pain and grime)?**

[by lifting our eyes to the bigger picture of God's promises, and the reality of how he has demonstrated himself to by trustworthy though history (and ultimately in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus]

Read John 17:1-11, Luke 24:44-end and Acts 1:1-11

In John 17, Jesus is praying for himself and for us. He knows that he's about to go to the cross, and so has his imminent death very much close-up in view.

* + **What is the tone of his prayer?**
  + **How many times do the words 'glory' and 'glorify' appear in these verses?**
  + **The American pastor and theologian John Piper puts it like this: "He’s taking the long-range view which expects ultimate victory even while pre- supposing conflict" - how does that same approach help us to keep things in their right perspective?**

In verse 3, Jesus defines 'eternal life' as 'knowing God and Jesus Christ'.

* + **What do you think he means by 'knowing him'**

[bear in mind that the verb translated 'know' is the same one used for the intimate way in which a husband and wife 'know' one another.]

* + **How can we be sure that knowing Jesus will bring us to eternal life in the presence of God?**

[read v5 & v11 - Jesus makes a bold claim about having been in glory with the Father before the world began, and another that he is coming to be with the Father in glory again. Had he not ascended, we could not have known that it was possible for us too, but when Jesus ascended bodily to be taken to be with the Father, that opens the door to us being there with him too.]

John Calvin described the Ascension as being 'one of the chiefest points of our faith’

* + **Why do you think he said that?**
  + **What would have been different if Jesus hadn’t ascended?**

Consider the biblical worldview of the 1st Century, and then consider the detail of the Ascension

* + **What is the significance of Jesus being lifted ‘upwards’?**

[They believe that the world was flat, and the heavens as being some place beyond the sky, so upwards corresponded to that worldview and communicated something particular]

* + **What is the significance of the cloud obscuring him from view?**

[what did the cloud represent on Sinai, during the Exodus, or in the Temple?]

* + **How do you think that the Ascension might have been represented differently had it taken place in the 21st Century?**

David Gooding comments that “it would be as daft to try to speculate about the mechanics and physics of his ascension as it would be unscientific to claim that ‘science’ declares the whole thing impossible. True science seeks to understand and describe the normal. It’s for history to tell us whether something abnormal that science cannot yet explain has in fact happened. Science is not omniscient (it can’t even explain all it can observe), it can’t rule out in advance such a possibility. If history has given overwhelming evidence that, in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the great redeeming and re-creating power of God has broken into the regularities of our fallen world, true science will adjust its world-view to allow for it.”

* + **What do you make of those observations?**
  + **What does it mean to you that Jesus is, right now, actually at the side of God the Father making representations on your behalf?**

**SPEND TIME REFLECTING ON THE PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS OF ‘KNOWING’ JESUS EQUATING TO ETERNAL LIFE, AND OF THE PERSONAL DIMENSION TO JESUS’ ASCENSION. PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER AND GIVE THANKS.**