

Title: For Us and Our Salvation

Text: 1 Timothy 3:14-16

Date: September 14, 2025

Good morning, everyone. It's good to see you all this morning. If you have your Bibles with you, for your great benefit and joy I would ask that you would turn in them to 1 Timothy 3:14-16. 1 Timothy 3:14-16. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:14-16:

"These things I write to you hoping to come to you soon, but if I delay, I write to you in order that you might know how it is necessary to conduct oneself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and foundation of the truth. And by common confession, the mystery of godliness is great. He's revealed in flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among Gentiles, believed in the world, taken up in glory."

This is God's word and let us pray together.

Father, we thank you for this day. Thank you for this moment that we have to be taught by you, and we ask that you would do that by your Spirit, that we might have eyes to see the glory of your Son, that we might further know you as our Father, that we might be encouraged in the faith, that we might be made more sure of the salvation that you alone have bought and given to us in Jesus. Father, I pray that as we carry and we talk about these weighty things, things concerning you, things concerning your word, things concerning things that are far above our understanding. Lord, we ask that you would grant us precision of words, lights of understanding, honorable speech, and true faith. Lord, enable us to believe that which we also speak, so that we may confess you, one God, our Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ as taught by the prophets and the apostles. And now against the contradictions of heretics, to proclaim you as God and Christ as Lord.

We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

To begin today, I would like to start out with, in addition to what Pastor Zach has said this morning, three things that I would place before you today as the biggest, some of the biggest problems of our world today. We already have heard some of these things this morning, but I'm going to have three things I think are the biggest problems in our world. Number one is biblical illiteracy. What is the Bible all about? Number two is theological illiteracy. As in, who is God? Who is God? Number three is expressive individualism. Expressive individualism, the autonomous self, you might say, the rebellious, the rebelliousness, the external authorities coming in.

And as Carl Trueman defines in *Strange New World*, that the modern self is one where authenticity is achieved by acting outwardly in accordance with one's inward feelings. That subjectivity is the new

objectivity. Expressive individualism. I would say that these three things together characterize and can be explanatory for why we see many things we do in today's world. Unfortunately, the rise of these issues in our culture have greatly affected the church. And instead of the church bringing change to the world around us through keeping a high standard of biblical and theological rigor and literacy, we have seen over and over again the unfortunate lowering of the bar to make it more palatable for the world around us, to have a lower and lower least common denominator that binds us together.

And Christianity at large has done this and muddled the Bible's emphasis on the goodness of church authority, and the corporate body is something fundamental to the identity of the Christian, to the goodness of theology for the Christian life, and of biblical literacy, of knowing the Bible well as essential to living. And I don't think I'm making a stretch to say that expressive individualism combined with biblical and theological literacy among professing believers, that influence produces incorrect statements about God, about the Bible, and an improper posture towards the church.

For instance, people professing Christ or in the church may say the following things: you know, God seems mean perhaps if he judges people eternally, so maybe that isn't actually true. Can it kind of change what I think about that? It doesn't make any sense that Jesus who is a man could also be God, so we have to find some other historical or some other explanation for that truth about what Jesus can do, about who he is. Churches are man-made institutions, and I don't feel like that's important, so therefore I won't do it. You know, I have my personal individual relationship with Jesus. I don't need the church. Biblical illiteracy, not knowing what the Bible actually says, theological illiteracy, not knowing what Christians confess to be true about God, combined with a feeling that subjectivity reigns supreme, produces these kinds of statements.

If you don't believe that my conjecture is correct, just listen to some of the recent surveys done by Ligonier in the state of theology. 20% of professing Christians disagree with the statement that there is one God who exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. 67% of professing Christians agree that God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. 55% of professing Christians either somewhat or strongly agree with the statement that Jesus Christ is the first and greatest created being. 53% of professing Christians either somewhat or strongly agree that the statement Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God. 59% of professing Christians either somewhat agree or strongly agree with the statement that the Holy Spirit is a force but not a personal being. And 67% of professing Christians either somewhat agree or strongly agree with the statement that worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending a church. In short, large numbers of individuals who profess the name of Christ do not agree with key church doctrine such as the doctrines of God, the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the person of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of the church, and all of these are in my opinion by products of biblical illiteracy, theological illiteracy, and expressive individualism. So, the question is, what are we to do as Christians in the world? Combating these issues in the world will be done by a variety of things, but I suspect it's not going to be by something new but by returning to something old.

And one of the most common tools that the church has used in its 2,000 years of church history from the Bible to now is a tool that has cut against cultural trends to biblical illiteracy, that has promoted

theological literacy in the church, and that has fundamentally given the church a sense of corporate identity rather than expressive individualism is a little thing known as creeds and confessions, creeds and confessions. And one creed in particular has been one of the most important documents in history of the church, and in fact Kevin DeYoung said in his book on this creed that it is the most important document in Christian life outside of the Bible, and it is known as the Nicene Creed. And that is what we'll be going over today.

This is not a typical sermon, I know, it's not a, you know, we at Grace Chapel will typically preach expositionally, we go through book by book, section by section, but once in a while we'll go over a topic, a theological topic. A couple months ago we looked at the ascension, we recognize ascension Sunday, and we talked about the ascension of the risen Lord, that all important theological doctrine. And today we are recognizing something else that has great theological import for the church, and that I felt I just couldn't pass up, because this year in 2025 is the 1700th anniversary, the 1700th birthday of this creed, 1700 years of this creed standing for the standard of orthodoxy in the church.

In the year 325 AD there was a false teaching going around from a pastor named Arius who taught that Jesus Christ was the first and created being. He had good intentions, he was trying to use the Bible to do so, he was trying to uphold the supremacy of God, the uniqueness of the Father. But in like so many heresies he had to deny one truth to promote and overemphasize another. This heresy led to much disagreement in the church and much unrest that had struck at the heart of the Christian faith in the gospel, which strikes at the heart of who God is and how he relates to us in Christ. So, a group of pastors and other church leaders in the known world at the time gathered together in the city of Nicaea, which is in modern day Turkey in order to settle what the Bible says. What does the Bible confess to be true about God in the gospel? Let's settle this once and for all. And at this council these pastors penned the words of the Nicene Creed refuting the heresy of Arianism, defending orthodox Christianity according to Scripture, and establishing from that point on a standard of biblical interpretation, of biblical theology, in a church practice that would span the next seventeen hundred years that we are still reaping the benefits of.

Today I seek to simply remind us of this very useful tool. It's not the Bible, but it is according to Scripture as it says. Today we will cover the theology of the Creed, the theology of God, the Trinity, the gospel, the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the church, and the Creed's usefulness for applying Scripture to our lives, defending the doctrine that we hold so dear, increasing our knowledge of God and contending for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. Indeed, creeds and confessions have an essential aspect of church life and doctrine since Paul as we read this morning. In 1 Timothy 3:14-16 Paul is concluding his famous section on the organization of the church. Who are the elders? Who are the deacons? How are they supposed to be qualified and not qualified? How is the church supposed to function? He says, *"I write these things to you hoping to come to you soon, but if I delay, I write in order that you might know how it is necessary to conduct oneself in the household of God, how to have order in the church."* And I want to focus on the connection between verses 15 and 16, where he props up the church as the pillar and foundation of the truth, that the church is foundational to the truth, that it upholds it, that it protects it, that it defends it, that it sustains it. Where a church is not present, sustained healthy preaching of the Bible is not present either.

In the beginning of verse 16, Paul tells us in accordance with this, connects that idea with the mystery of godliness being great, that it is profound, it's important, it's significant, it is complex, it is awesome, beyond our understanding. And therefore, it needs to have a pillar and a buttress. It's so important, it needs that protection, it needs that defense. It is to be held up by this entity, the church. And the church either undermines or strengthens this function of theirs by the conduct that they have, by whether they're orderly functioning with pastors and deacons and all these things. But Paul also assumes, by the use of one word, a very important aspect of the church's role in being a pillar and buttress of the truth. He says at the beginning of verse 16, and by common confession, or we confess, the mystery is great, *"the mystery of godliness is great."* Paul assumes, in other words, that the confession of the great mystery of godliness is fundamental to the church's role in being a foundation of it.

The mystery of godliness is such, that the church supports and defends it through its proper conduct, and that it is first and foremost the mystery of godliness that the church confesses to be great. The mystery of godliness that the church supports and defends through its proper conduct, as Paul says, is first and foremost the mystery of godliness that the church confesses to be great. It confesses it. And Paul does not follow this statement by quoting from Genesis to Revelation. He doesn't quote the entire Bible. He actually doesn't even quote a verse. The confession that he quotes is one that either he or someone else in the Old Church wrote. It's a summary of what the entire Bible teaches about Christ, about God, about salvation.

In Paul's writings, there are several of these creeds or confessions. We read one this morning, Colossians 1:15-20, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. All of these are known to be used in the early churches. Summaries of the faith that the church would confess together as what they believe in order to defend and uphold the truth. In other words, in both principle and in practice, Paul does not believe that there is no creed but the Bible. Rather, Paul himself uses summaries of the doctrine of God, of the doctrine of Christ, of the doctrine of the gospel, and argues that the confession of that truth and these formats are vital to the church's life.

So according to Paul's command and Paul's principles and to Paul's example, we as the church ought to be confessing together what we believe and what we know to be true from God's Word. That's why we do a call to worship in some senses. We speak these things to be true together. Good theology leads to godly living and bad theology leads to ungodly living, according to Paul and the church. And that is exactly why the early church wrote the Nicene Creed, not as a replacement of scripture, but as a tool that communicates what the sum of scriptures say about God and the gospel and the story of all reality itself. The Nicene Creed we will see combats theological illiteracy, biblical illiteracy, and expressive individualism by telling us who God is, what God has done, and who we are, and how to live. Who God is, what God has done, and who we are, and how to live. The Creed tells us first who God is combating theological illiteracy.

A.W. Tozer famously wrote, what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. And you cannot have a good thought come into your minds about God if we don't know who he is. As beings created by God for the purpose of glorifying God and knowing him, it is imperative that we know who he is in his very nature, that he is revealed in scripture to us. We were created for knowing God. That is, this is why true eternal life, life that is most pure, life that is most glorious, life that

was intended since the beginning, life that is the hope for all of us, is defined by John, by Jesus himself in John 17:3: *"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* According to the Nicene Creed, God is one God, existing in three persons according to scripture. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one divine nature, three persons, one divine will, three persons, one glory, three persons, one power, three persons. He is one God. He is first one God. The unity or oneness of God is stated as each person is introduced.

I've given you a copy of the Creed in your bulletin notes where he says, you notice, I believe in one God, one. And later on, in one Lord, Jesus Christ, and I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the giver of life. This comes straight from the heart of scripture, Deuteronomy 6:4, *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."* He's one. The Bible is very, very clear, very early on that the Lord is one. There is one God and one Lord that we worship, one God that we serve. There are not many. There's only one God. That's it. And we see the rest of the Bible story unfold that this one God or Lord is identified as also three persons. That this title, this divine title of God and Lord is described to different people. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Creed says. Philippians 2:11 says, *"every knee will bow and tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."* He's Lord. He's that one Lord from Deuteronomy 6. He is God. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:17, *"the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* The Lord is the Spirit. The Spirit is the Lord.

So, the entirety of scripture puts this pressure on us to say there's one God. Yes, that's what it says. There's one God. And yet the Father is Lord. The Son is Lord. The Spirit is Lord. And that pressures us to confess there's one God and three persons. Absolute mystery. Absolute glory. The incomprehensible God. We Christians are monotheists. We believe in one God, in one God alone. And there is no other God but him. He will not give his glory to another. We worship this one glorious, incomprehensible God. But he's also three persons according to the language of scripture. The Father is, as the Creed says, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. Ephesians 4:6 tells us this, *"There is just one God and Father of all who is overall and through all and in all."* That God is indeed Father. That this Father is also Almighty. As Genesis 17:1 says, *"I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless."* I am completely omnipotent, completely omniscient. I am all powerful. I am great. I am Almighty. 1 Corinthians 8:6 says, *"there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."* Paul states that God is the Creator, the maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible, the one from whom are all things. And as we see in the very first pages of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* He is the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. Together these statements describe the Bible's teaching about the transcendence of God, about his creating power, about how we, because we are creatures created by him or responsible to him, that he is Almighty and we are not, that he is God and we are not, that he is infinite in might and strength and power.

Second, we have God is not only Father, but he is Son. If God is eternally Father, then who is he the Father of? The Bible tells us, and the Creed summarizes for us that the Son is the only begotten Son of God. Begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. There is one key reality that this Creed confesses the complete and equal divinity of the Father and the Son. The Creed utilizes the biblical language of

begotten, only begotten. Of course, you have memorized John 3:16 in the KJV, his only begotten Son he sent into the world. He's the one who is begotten of the Father, eternally so. And this begotten language is, it communicates two things to us, that there is one, an intimate relationship between the Father and the Son, and two, that they are exact, the exact same kind and substance the Father and the Son are.

We know this on the human level, right? Parents and children have a very intimate relationship naturally. Babies want to be laid on their mother's chest. Similarly, humans give birth to humans. I've never seen a human give birth to anything else, but a human, like substance, the same substance. They are both human. But where the analogy obviously fails is ultimately that a human being being born is, that's the beginning of their life. But for God, it's different. Begottenness is eternal. Christ had no beginning. The Son had no beginning and no point in time was he ever not begotten. He's always been the begotten Son of the Father. He is always and eternally the same substance as the Father. He is always eternally equal with the Father, and he's always eternally in an intimate relationship with his Father. If the Father is to be an eternal Father, he must have an eternal Son.

As Hebrews 1:3 states, *"He is the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."* As much as glory and light, as light and its radiance cannot be separated, cannot exist without one another, so the Father and the Son have always existed together in perfect communion. The Son is not a creature. He is not the first and created being. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is, as he says in Revelation 22:13, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* He's never had a beginning and he will never have an end. He is the eternal God, the Son.

The third person is the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. As John 15:26 says, *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."* Just as the Son is begotten of the Father and that communicates their intimate relationship and their absolute unity. So, the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son is to indicate his intimate relationship and his absolute equality and unity with them. He is therefore together and worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. As Revelation 1:4-5 says, in his doxological beginning of the book of Revelation, that, *"Grace and peace will come to you from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne."* There is one glorious God and there are three glorious persons, but there is only one glory. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not three manifestations, not three different expressions, but three distinct persons, forever dwelling in eternally existing and eternal relationship with one another. And it is one glorious mystery.

You might be saying, why does any of this matter? Well, first and foremost, let's return to John 17:3. Your purpose, Christian, my purpose, human being, is to know God. And if he's revealed himself in this way as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then how can we relate to him in any other way? How can we say we know him in any other way? It is imperative that we know this to be true about him, because to know him is to live. That's why we must know this. That's why this is important. How are you supposed to, as we sung the day, behold our God seated on his throne, to come and behold the wondrous mystery if we have no concept of what the mystery is? This is why this is important. This is why theological literacy matters,

because as soon as we don't know that the Son is fully God, then we start saying things like, well, maybe he was the first and best creature. As soon as we don't know that the Holy Spirit is a personal being, we don't understand the text in Acts that says Ananias and Sapphira blaspheme God by blasphemy the Spirit. This is so important because your life is all about knowing God.

Second, the creed tells us what God has done, contra biblical illiteracy. The creed is not merely a set of doctrinal affirmations, but it is a recitation of the story of reality from eternal beginning to eternal end. From eternal God, triune, transcendent above all things to maker of heaven and earth, to redeemer of people through the sending of the Son, to the formation of the church, and to life without end in the kingdom that will never end. The creed is a summary of the Bible, and the Bible stretches all of reality, your reality, my reality. The creed tells a story, tells that story about how all things are shaped by the triune God and that all things are truly from Him and to Him and through Him.

All of history is a massive story about how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit created all things, is redeeming all things, and restoring all things to its rightful place for the purpose of that redeemed people coming to a right knowledge of Him. And therefore, it is not a surprise that the creed ultimately is about the gospel. Indeed, one cannot understand the gospel without the Trinity. As Kevin Vanhoozer theologian once wrote, the Trinity is long hand for the gospel and the gospel is shorthand for the Trinity. To understand the Trinity is to understand the fullness of what the gospel is. Just look at Ephesians 1. The Father planned, predestined before the ages began. The Son came redeemed by the blood of His cross. The Spirit seals regeneration of life into you.

We cannot talk about the gospel without saying, well the Father sent His Son into the world to save sinners. Who is the Father? Who is the Son? Who is the Spirit? What are you talking about? The heart and focus of the creed therefore is the gospel. More specifically we see that in the amount of content given to the Son's earthly work in the important phrase for us and for our salvation. The majority of this creed, despite its complexity with the Trinity, is all about the Son and what He has done for us. But what God has done in history, in reality, to bring us into a new reality. Bring us to salvation. The creed rightly understood brings together the twin realities of God's transcendence and greatness and mystery and the intimate goodness of the gospel. And it brings these two things together. You see the doctrine of God, the Trinity by itself, might seem like this beautiful thing over here. It's great and wonderful. You want to know it. You want to have it. I want God. I want life. But it's just so out there. So, beyond my comprehension, I can't really grasp and see it. It doesn't seem to be given to you. You're like, I can't grasp it.

Surely those of us, I think this is kind of like those of us who have dogs, as you're sitting there eating your dinner and undoubtedly your dog is begging, usually by dad for some reason. I don't know why that's the case. But usually by dad and his eyes are looking. He can smell the food. It's up there. He can see it. Every fork you put into your mouth; he just smells it. He sees it. You can see it's salivating because he wants the food so bad. And if we follow the instruction of mom, typically, it is, I'm not going to give this to you. Why? Because it is not for you. It ain't for you, dog. It's not for you. This is human food.

Or a little bit more of a human example that certainly you've had a situation where you sat down with maybe your parents, your grandparents, maybe just a friend, and they are holding something very valuable to you in their hands. It's a book or it's a piece of jewelry or it's something that you really want, a rookie card for Brett Favre. I don't know, like something. It has something in his hands that you really, really want. They're talking about how great this item is, how useful it is, how well it has served them, how valuable it is, how well it can serve someone if it was used correctly. And you start looking like that dog. You're salivating, you're looking at it like, I just want some of that. It's out there, but I just can't. But then the beautiful thing that happens is that that person says, here, I want you to have it. This is for you. This is for you. And your heart erupts. You're elated with joy and excitement because you know that that beautiful, wonderful thing is for you. It's for your benefit. It's for your good. It's yours now. You have it. It's in your possession.

And in a beautiful turn of phrase, the creed confesses that very same thing about the gospel. He says, who for us men and for our salvation came, that it was for you, this divine, transcendent, holy, righteous God who has nothing to do with us. He didn't have to. Rebellious people, he is for you in Christ. He's for you. 1 Corinthians 15, *"I delivered to you what I also have received, that Christ Jesus died for our sins."* For us, for our salvation. That's the great news of the gospel, friends, that as we go down through this, he who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, was made man, was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. The third day he rose again according to the scriptures. He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, shall come again with glory to judge living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end for you, for us, for our salvation. What beautiful truth. That's the gospel, friends.

That's the gospel, that this fully God, man, would come because he had to, because only God could perfectly live the human life that we can never live, could perfectly die the human death that we can never die, could actually satisfy the just requirements of the law, who could actually be the substitution for us on the cross to bear our wrath on the tree, to be actually sacrificed in our place, to have the full strength of the wine cup of God's wrath poured out on him, to endure that to death and to raise again, because he has power, indestructible life, power. Therefore, he could not be held by death, could not be held by the tomb, but raise for our justification, for our life, so that you and I through faith in him might live, might have hope today. That triune God has worked that salvation in that way. What amazing truth today that for you, for us, he would do all of this. That the infinite power of God's wrath, of God's judgment, would not be placed on us because the infinite power of God's salvation and grace is given to us in Christ.

I think of Ephesians, Ephesians 1. Sorry, I'm just going to turn there briefly. Ephesians 1, where Paul is praying, *"that we would know what the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints are, and what is the superabounding greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his mighty strength, which he worked in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him at the right hand in the heavenly places."* That power has been worked for us. What else has God done? God spoke to us. How do we know about the salvation that he's won for us in Christ? He spoke to us, and it says the spirit spoke by the prophets that we have it revealed in scripture to know that that is what is true, that that is what God has done. And how to receive all this? Has everyone received this great gift? No, what is the key word in a

creed? What does creed mean? I believe and that is exactly what we see at the beginning of each phrase. I believe in one God. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe. I believe. That is how we receive this great and awesome gift. It is by believing in this God and in this gospel that he has won for us. That is what God has done. That is what God has done. This text drips with the gospel of the scriptures as it highlights in its very name and structure the truth that this salvation is only through belief in Christ. The creed tells us that great story, that great gospel, that great reality, not only who God is, but what God has done.

And finally, it tells us who we are and how to live. And this combats expressive individualism. First of all, it tells us who we are. We are God's corporate body. We're God's corporate body. Since the creed is a recitation of the story of reality from eternal to beginning to eternal end, when we recite it, when we say, when we remind ourselves, when we look to 1 Timothy 3:14-16, remind ourselves of that is what the gospel is. We confess that summary of all what scripture says. We're entering into, we're confessing that this is our reality as well. That we as the people of God have received the work of God in Christ. Contrary to expressive individualism, reality and truth are dictated to us from above, not brought about from within. And we see that this corporate body that God creates is called the church. God creates this spirit united, one holy, Catholic, apostolic church.

The church is, first of all, it is one. As Paul confesses in Romans 3:29-30, *"is God the God of Jews only? Is he not also the God of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one - who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith."* That this one God creates one people. One people. He also says that the church is holy, that just as God is holy, this people has been united, this holy Son are considered holy and blameless before him. This is a catholic church as in a universal church, a small c, catholic church, a universal church that a people of God from every tribe, tongue and nation is being gathered together for his namesake. And it's also, most importantly, I would say apostolic. As in ever since the beginning of the church in Acts 2, the church has been, as Acts 2:42 says, *"devoted to the apostles' teaching."* Led by the apostles teaching, thirsty and hungry for the apostles teaching.

In fact, the church is not the church unless it is the teaching of the word of God. Without the apostolic signifier there, all three of the other ones are completely lost. Without the preaching and teaching of God's word, without the apostles teaching, the church cannot be universal because faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. It cannot be holy because by God's word being preached, that we are not only saved be holy before God, but also how we live holy lives. And it cannot be one because without the one truth of the Bible, without the preaching and teaching of Scripture, the church would be in all kinds of fancy and thinking that is contrary, indifferent, just as different as each one of us are individually.

And finally, it not only tells us who we are, but also how to live, how to live. Specifically, it tells us what to confess, what to practice, and what to look for. What to confess, first of all, preach the gospel to yourself every day. That's what we say around here. What a better way to do that, and then maybe one of the days out of the week, maybe one day every two weeks. Just read this statement. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. Make it a prayer. That's what

it's supposed to be. God, I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only God and Son of God, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. He came down for me to be crucified, to be raised again for my salvation. Confess that good theology. Confess that to grow in your knowledge of God. Go to the creeds that Paul writes in Scripture to Colossians 1 to Philippians 2. Confess those. Grow in your understanding of who our God is and what he has done.

Second, it tells us what to practice. The creed tells us that since we have been created and saved by the one God, then the entirety of our Christian lives are shaped according to the Trinity. That we are saved by the Father in the Son and by the Spirit. That everything we receive is from the Father in the Son and by the Spirit. That everything was created in that way. That everything has been redeemed that way. That everything is going to be recreated that way. And if you don't believe me, just look at our three regular spiritual disciplines and how they are not only shaped by, but also to be practiced and directed toward the Triune God. The Word of Grace. God spoke to us in his Son and by his Spirit as Hebrews 1:2 says, *"but in these last days he spoke to us in his Son."* And 2 Peter 1:21 says, *"men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* That we read our Father's Word to us in order to behold the Son by the illumination of the Spirit of God. As 1 Corinthians 2:12 says, *"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."* That we might behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as we read the Bible by the power of the Holy Spirit to know the Father.

I mean, do you hear all this? We might even say this. This is in our vernacular. This is driven in every part of our lives in reading the Bible. And since this is true, have a certain posture when you approach the Bible. Understand that you are in utter dependence upon the Spirit of God to understand this. As we come to the Bible, have a purpose to say, not only humbly dependent upon the Spirit, but I know that I need to read in order to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ for my purpose of knowing God, because I know that knowing God is life for me. Approach your Bible like that. And since the Bible is written by the Triune God for the purpose of knowing the Triune God, then understanding the text of Scripture should be done with reference to the Triune God. The creed offers a kind of a picture on the puzzle box to look at as we read the Bible. As the creed summarizes the Bible from beginning to end in this way in the Gospel and who God is and we can use this as a way to understand what the Bible is all about, which helps us understand what each passage is about.

Second, the throne of grace. We pray to the Father in the Son by the Spirit. Matthew 6:9, Jesus says to pray, *"Our Father."* John 14:14, *"if you ask anything in my name, I will do it."* In Jesus' name, we pray. That's why. And we do it by the Spirit, as Romans 8:26 says, *"For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."* Structure the language of your prayers like that. Father, I pray this. In Jesus' name, by the Spirit of God. Pray in the pattern of the Scriptures.

Finally, fellowship of grace. We are gathered as a church of God, the Father, the bride of Christ, united by the Spirit of God to the Son of God. That when we sing praises to God, we worship God the Father in the Son and by the Spirit, as John 17:1 says, *"Jesus says, glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you."*

Glorifying Jesus needs glory to the Father. And we also see in John 4:24 that we worship truly when we *"worship in spirit and in truth."* God is glorified in our worship when we speak about Him rightly, when we rightly glorify the Son in the Spirit. And we ought to be careful about how we speak about God in our worship of Him to render honor and praise to the triune God as the triune God who saved us.

And finally, it tells us what to look for. This Creed tells us what to look for. As it says at the end of the Creed here, it says, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Friends, in weeks like this, in weeks where everything seems grim, where death is very obvious to us, where evil is pervading everything, it seems. What are you going to look for? What are you going to look to? And this Creed, just as the Bible does, it's, it lifts our eyes to hope in, to look for the resurrection of the dead, when all things will be made right. For life in the world to come, for the return of the Son who will come to judge the living and the dead, who will establish a kingdom that will not end.

Friends, if nothing else today, take hope in looking for that day, hoping in the resurrection, hoping in the life that is to come. Do that today. That is where our hope lies. That is where the gospel leads us. That is where good theology, good biblical literacy, a right understanding of who we are before God leads us. It is the everlasting hope in Him and in the gospel. If the church is going to be a pillar and buttress of the truth in today's world, then we must be a church who holds fast to the confession of the mystery of Godliness. As we daily and weekly confess Jesus Christ as Lord, through the words of this Creed and others, let us always utilize these words to cast our gaze on our God, the salvation that He has wrought for us in Christ, the salvation that He is impressed in our hearts by His Spirit, in the resurrection and life that we await when Christ returns. Praise God. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your word. We thank you for the teaching of your people across generations and for how this document has preserved biblical truth and the biblical reality that you are the triune God and that you are the God of salvation, that you are the God of the gospel, and that in saving us, we don't merely just get salvific benefits. We don't merely just get life, but we get life because it is knowing you. We get life because we get you. We get you. Father, grow us and shape us to know more clearly the doctrine of your scriptures. Help us to labor together on our way to heaven, to labor on, to know you more and to know you more deeply in life and suffering and in death.

Father, we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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