



# THE CREED

WHAT WE BELIEVE



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**Week 2 - “Creator of Heaven and Earth”**

Introduction: Why the Creed?

We are continuing working through the Apostles’ Creed. The Creed is a document that wasn’t inspired by God, but that is the most ancient of all of the summaries of what Christians believe. And as Cody said last week, this isn’t all that Christians believe, but you can’t believe less than the Creed and still call yourself a Christian.

Which sounds judgmental, but Christians have certain beliefs and practices, just like every group does. You can’t be a meat-eating vegetarian, and you can’t be a Christian who denies what Christians believe. So it’s important for us to lay out what we believe in the sound words of this 1700 year old creed to be reminded of what defines us.

And our plan is that once we have taught through some of the more controversial and difficult to understand phrases in the Creed, that we will begin, not weekly, but regularly reciting this together. Why?

As a Public Act of Confession

When we sing a song, we are singing things we believe to be true, but written by a single person usually. When we recite the Apostles’ Creed, we are saying something that the church at large has believed to be true for almost two thousand years across the entire spectrum of Christian belief.

It's like a time-tested song of praise, agreed upon by all Christians through all time. That has a lot more weight than any individual worship song we sing, especially many of the contemporary songs,,some of which are mainly testimonies about my feelings in a moment.

Our world needs weighty, solid, unchanging things. In the Creed we have the importance of the undiluted Gospel, we are saying: it must be at least these things or it's not Christianity.

### Because It Forms Us Over Time

To paraphrase Trueman, lately churches have sadly become places where we go, not to be formed, but to perform.<sup>1</sup> They became places to express our individual talents and personalities and gifts. Whereas historically they were places that formed us. And reciting the Creed so that we're reminded of it, so we eventually memorize it, will help form us over time.

Cody walked us through the first part of the creed last week, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," and today I'll talk about the second phrase, "Creator of heaven and earth." We'll take as our text Psalm 100:1-5

Psalm 100:1-5 "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

2 Serve the LORD with gladness!

Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving,

and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

5 For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures forever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

At the heart of this Psalm is verse 3 "Know that the LORD, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his;

we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Trueman, The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self. (Wheaton:Crossway, 2020). p. 49.

Christians believe that God is the uncreated creator of heaven and earth, and that everything that is not God was created by God. We have certainly made some things out of what God made, some good and some bad. But God is the original creator, who created from nothing, or ex-nihilo.

Which means that as much as we can create and make things, we will never rise to the level of God, we will never be Creators like Him. Because only He creates out of nothing.

Philosopher William Lane Craig tells a story of a scientist who finally figured out how everything was made and built a machine that could make life out of dust, just like God did, and he challenged God one day and said "I'm now your equal because, just as you made life out of the dust, I can make life out of the dust."

So God created out of dust again to show the scientist He still had His creative ability, and the scientist started loading dust into his machine<sup>2</sup>, and then God cuts him off and says, "Wait a second, get your own dust."

We can make a lot of amazing things, but only God spoke it into existence and created it all from nothing.

[Hebrews 11:3](#) "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible."

God created the universe with His words. And because He made everything out of nothing, not out of God, that shapes how we view the world.

Some religions, like pantheistic religions, would say that the universe is created "ex-deo", or out of the same substance as God, while Christians would say it's created "ex-nihilo," out of nothing, by God.

### Pantheism

Pantheism is the idea that "all is God." But God is not the stuff He made, and the stuff He made is not God. So we treat the material world as the creation of God and a gift

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from [To Everyone an Answer](#), page 79.

from God that we are called to manage wisely, but we don't worship the material world.

We don't worship it explicitly through pagan rituals and bowing down to material things like idols and statues. And we don't worship it implicitly by treating it like it can satisfy us.

We don't expect it to do for us what only God can do. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has placed eternity in our hearts, and because the material world was made, it had a beginning, it isn't eternal. It can't satisfy. No matter how much of the world we get, how much we achieve here, no matter how many experiences we have here, they can never be enough. Because the material world isn't God, and our hearts can only be satisfied in Him.

Repeatedly in the Bible, God forbids his people from thinking of him as the same as anything else in creation.

Exodus 20:4-5 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them for I the LORD your God am a jealous God..."

We wonder why God cared so much that we not make things that represent God, and one big reason is that when all of the religions in the world were worshipping the creation like that, God was driving home the reality to His people that He chose to reveal Himself to that He is not part of the creation.

Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

He's Creator, not Creation, totally separate from His Creation.

### Dualism

The fact that God made the material world also means that we reject dualism, which is the idea that the universe is under the control of two opposing forces, good and evil, the idea symbolized in part by the yin and yang, where evil and good balance each other and give rise to each other and exist in tension with one another.

Everything that isn't God is beneath God, so He is not locked in some cosmic battle with his equal out there, it is all below Him. He's creator, everything else is creation. God has no equal, God has no opposite. Satan is not the opposite of God, just His evil twin brother who balances God's goodness with his evil. It's all beneath God.

This creator/creation distinction is incredibly important, it shapes how we view the world, it's so central to what Christians believe that we can't call ourselves Christians if we don't hold to the fact that God is the Creator of heaven and earth as the Creed affirms.

### And Creation Affirms This Line of the Creed

And all around us, the world we live in is constantly displaying to us the evidence of the creator, and it is plain to us:

Romans 1:19-20 "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse

And there is evidence all around us that we have a creator. The design all around us points to the fact that we have a designer.

Through the ages, hundreds of brilliant minds have studied the creation and said there must be a Creator behind it.

### The Evidence of Design

I could never exhaust the arguments for design in one sermon, but I posted a few book titles at the bottom of the sermon manuscript if you wanted to look further into the evidence for a designer.

A few weeks ago, I quoted an atheist named Anthony Flew, who wrote and spoke and debated widely, arguing that God could not exist because there's so much evil in the world, among other reasons.

But before he died, Flew, who never became a Christian as far as I can tell, came around to the fact that he couldn't get away from all the evidence for the existence of God, and he wrote an excellent book called There is a God a few years before he died.

And in a chapter called “Did the Universe know we were coming?,” Flew wrote, “the laws of nature seem to have been crafted so as to move the universe toward the emergence and sustenance of life.”

### The Evidence in the Code: The Informational-Theoretic Design Argument<sup>3</sup>

And then he looks at how complex life is, particularly the complex code in a strand of DNA, and asks how that could ever have coded itself, even over billions of years. It’s a complex language, and that amount of code or language that works to tell matter to be formed into our cells and our bodies couldn’t possibly have originated without a coder.

*In 1996 I spent my freshman year at RIT studying computer engineering, before God mercifully delivered me from that major by calling me into ministry. And 25 years ago, computers weren’t what they are now. So to write code, we would have to go to a computer lab, we’d spend hours writing it, then we’d tell the computer to compile it, click, and it took so long we could walk to the vending machine and socialize while we waited. And then, we’d test the program, and if we messed up the code, it was back to the drawing board. So it would take late nights, working into the night, just to make the simplest of codes for a tic tak toe program that didn’t even have graphics yet.*

So what kind of engineering mind would it take to write the code that’s on a single piece of DNA that tells a cell to multiply, differentiate, and form us?

We know that code came from somewhere intelligent.

*In Dr. Steven Meyer’s book, Signature in the Cell, he writes, “Either information-rich systems arise from preexisting systems of information via a mechanism of replication, or information-rich systems arise from minds...After all, the computer hardware that can copy and process information in software originated in the mind of an engineer.”<sup>4</sup>*

Even before the complexity of the code on DNA was discovered, William Paley in the

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<sup>3</sup> [1] William A. Dembski, “An Information-Theoretic Design Argument,” in To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J.P. Moreland (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 77.

<sup>4</sup> Steven C. Meyer, Signature in the Cell. (San Francisco: Harper One, 2009), 384.

late 1700s compared the complexity of life and the mathematical precision with which the universe is made to a finely-made watch. We would never think that a watch we found in a field came from anywhere else but a watchmaker, and what we find in the universe and biological life is orders of magnitude more complex and so well-coded that we know there must be a coder.

So the information in a single cell says, "There's a creator of heaven and earth."

And then the fact that there is anything at all, and not just nothing, says that it originated somewhere. German mathematician Leibnitz asked the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"<sup>5</sup>

Some would say the universe is eternal, it has always existed from eternity past. But a moving, expanding universe can't be eternal in the past - it wouldn't still be moving, it wouldn't still be warm. If it didn't have a beginning, then it would have long since died out and stopped moving. So it had a beginning.

And one argument for God's creation goes like this:

- 1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause
- 2) The universe began to exist
- 3) Therefore, the universe has a cause<sup>6</sup>

The universe has a Creator. And Romans says we know this. We know this to be true, we may try to avoid it, we may be able to ignore it, but there is a Creator of heaven and earth, and we are not Him.

And this Creator/Creation distinction is incredibly important when it comes to how we view ourselves, our place in the world, and our relationship to God.

A.W. Tozer writes that *"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."*<sup>7</sup>

When it comes to knowing who we are and what we are for, there's nothing more important than knowing who God is.

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<sup>5</sup> William Lane Craig in Reasonable Faith, p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeKavDdRVlg>

<sup>7</sup> Tozer, A.W., The Knowledge of the Holy (New York: HarperCollins, 1978) 1.

The fact that He is the Creator of heaven and earth and we are part of that creation does a couple of important things. We are creatures, and as creatures of God, we have both CREATURELY LIMITS and CREATURELY DIGNITY.

First, our

### Creaturely Limits

Honestly, this the part our hearts don't like, naturally. This is the main reason that many suppress the knowledge of God. Because, again, Psalm 100:3:

Psalm 100:3 " Know that the LORD, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

Because God made us, we know some things about God. He is all powerful, or omnipotent. He is all-wise, or omniscient. And He never has any need. But we are always not Him - we don't know a lot, we're not very strong, and we are always dependent on God for our life and being.

Augustine, in his sermon on Psalm 100:

*"What reason [do you have] for exultation, what reason [do you have] for pride? Another made you; the Same who made you, suffers from you. But you extol yourselves, and glory in yourselves, as if you were created by yourselves..."*

We are creatures, with creaturely limits.

We live in a culture that is at war with limits. The American mantra is "You can do anything you put your mind to." "You can be anything you want to be."

We are in rebellion against limits, even though they are God-given and for our good. We have gifts and strengths, but also weaknesses and deficiencies. We have things we are wired to do well, and things we are not wired to do well. God has given us boundaries and capacities.

And in our day, we think that is just restrictive. I'd be the best me if nobody on the outside were telling me what to do.



But as Chesterton wrote, *"The more I considered Christianity, the more I found that while it had established a rule and order, the chief aim of that order was to give room for good things to run wild."*<sup>8</sup>

He has given us our calling in life to guide and limit us, his commandments to guide and limit us<sup>9</sup>. A river without banks is a flood and a life without limits is chaos. But we are a culture at war with all of those God given limits.

And when we churchify that war, we say Jesus wants me happy, and everyone knows you're happiest when you have no limits and you're free.

Because there are things that Christians will fail at, that we can never accomplish, dreams that never come true. There are God-given limits for our good, and often we are called to accept a limit on me for the good of others.

Because we are creation, we can't create ourselves, we can't be anything we want to be, and who I am isn't determined first and foremost by my feelings about who I am.

In our culture, we believe that I can be who I want to be. And if I feel a certain way, that determines who I am. This comes from philosophers like Jean Paul Satre<sup>10</sup>, who essentially said mankind creates his own meaning and value because there is no inherent meaning or purpose in mankind. Therefore, we are self-determining, self-actualizing, and self-moralizing.<sup>11</sup>

> on gender and identity

Alan Noble, *You are Not Your Own: Belonging to God in an Inhuman World* - "If you are not your own but belong to Christ, then the entire modern project of identity formation and expression is a sham. That means a major portion of our economy is based on the myth that we need to be someone unique. Expressive individualism is the logic guiding many modern industries."

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<sup>8</sup> From [Orthodoxy](#) by G.K. Chesterton.

<sup>9</sup> "In Eden, there was a maximum of liberty and a minimum of veto; but some veto is essential even to the enjoyment of liberty. The finest thing about a free meadow is the hedge at the end of it. The moment the hedge is abolished it is no longer a meadow, but a waste, as Eden was after its one limitation was lost." - Chesterton

<sup>10</sup> A great, quick primer of Sartre's philosophy that clearly shows the stark difference between this existentialist perspective and Christian worldview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWHz39MVvxs>

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existence\\_precedes\\_essence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existence_precedes_essence)

We either think my body is wrong or my feelings are wrong.  
In our day, feeling determine identity.  
We must say the maker is right, my feelings are wrong.  
Redefinition of marriage after all of human history

God is our maker, and we are His.

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<<<<Do more work here>>>>

If I feel a certain way, that is who I am←--this is how we define ourselves in our therapeutic age.

Doesn't mean if you feel a certain way that is rebellion against God. It does mean that if we take our feelings as truth over what God has revealed in nature and scripture, we are in rebellion against God.

gender ideology, concepts of selfhood  
Fluidity and choosing of who i am  
General reminder - God's definitions are better than ours. God defines life.

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Also, the fact that God is the Creator and we are the Creation means that we are not our own, we answer to Him for what we do with our lives and with the world around us.

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."](#)

We are made by God, therefore our purpose comes from God, our commands for how to live come from God, and we report back to Him because we aren't our own.

We are accountable to Him.

And all sin is disregarding our creaturely purpose, disregarding the One who made us and told us what to do with our lives. We don't get to make our own purpose, our own rules for living, our own self, our own sense of who I am. We get it from Him and will

one day stand before a judgment throne and answer to Him for what we did with the life we owed Him.

God doesn't answer to us as if we were His makers, we answer to Him because He is ours.

So we have creaturely limits because God is the Creator of heaven and earth.

And on top of that, the fact that everybody around us has the same Maker as us gives them all creaturely dignity and worth.

My kids, especially when they were smaller, would make me things. Works of art. Now if they had brought me one of their works of art, and I had said, "This isn't that good," I would have not only been insulting the work of art, I'd be insulting them. I'd be attacking not just their work, but their heart.

And the fact that everybody around us was made by the same "Creator of Heaven and Earth," means that if we treat anyone with less dignity, we are insulting their maker. We are attacking the heart of God.

Proverbs 14:31 "Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,

but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

Proverbs 17:5 "Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

This also creates equality in value among all people:

Proverbs 22:2 "The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the Maker of them all.

So if the place that all people meet on common ground is that the Lord is the maker of them all, then all people have equal dignity and worth. This means that every form of racism or superiority insults the maker of the person we look down upon. Every form of resentment against a group of people or a class of people is an insult to their maker.

And some of the grounds for caring about and protecting the unborn is that they have been made by God, they are not our work to dispose of, but His creation to honor:

Jeremiah 1:5 ““Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

God is their maker, already, in the womb. And they have creaturely dignity.

So the reason we do mercy ministry and care for the poor, the reason we hate racism, and the reason we do pro-life work and care for the unborn is that God is the “Creator of heaven and earth.”

Our sense of obligation to one another comes in part from our belief that God made them. They’re His. He loves them.

Call to love neighbors who reject our beliefs

Because they were made by God, the Father, almighty, creator of heaven and earth. So they have inherent dignity and worth.

God created everything on earth. But the creed also says He’s the creator of heaven.

And when it says he is the creator of heaven and earth, it could mean all the stuff up there that we see and all the stuff down here that we see - the whole universe. But they probably had in mind that God created both the stuff we can see and the stuff we can’t see.

The Nicene Creed, which came together around 200 years after the Apostles’ Creed, says, “We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.”

Which is consistent with the Bible’s teaching that God made everything, visible and invisible, and that there is an invisible realm that is just as real as the material one.

And at the creation, heaven and earth worked in harmony. The physical world perfectly reflected the realities in heaven. But then we sinned, and the harmony was broken.

Now you have the ways of heaven that are honoring to God and the ways of earth which are not.

And we are part of the problem. We have a maker that we deny with our words, or that we acknowledge with our words and then deny with our lives. We deny Him with the way we treat other people made in His image.

And the Creator is grieved with his creation.

There's a divorce between heaven and earth.

Hebrews 1:1-3 "1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The story of humanity is the story of God creating heaven and earth, Jesus Christ being that God who made it all. But then there was a divorce between heaven and earth. Our sin separated us from God.

But then, the Creator stepped in to Creation and made purification for sins.

The God who made us also paid the price to forgive us, so there could be a reconciliation of heaven and earth.

And we are invited to that.

We are invited to repent and believe so our sins can be forgiven and we can stand before our maker again.

And then we are called to be part of a people that pray "as earth as it is in heaven" and that work to see the ways of earth look more like the ways of heaven.

## Prayer of Confession

Allow some time for silent confession

Father, we confess that so often we live in rebellion against being creatures. We want to ascend to be our own creators and our own lords. We want to define ourselves, make ourselves, and achieve glory for ourselves. But all of this is sin against who you made us to be.

Jesus, we thank you that when you stepped into the creation, you always lived in accordance with reality. You lived to glorify your Father, you depended on your Father, you accepted human limits even though you are, by nature, the unlimited one. And then you went to the lowest place and died for our sins, even for our high-handed rebellion against who you made us to be. And now, by grace, through faith, forgiveness is ours.

Holy Spirit, don't let us get away from the truth. That you are Creator, we are Creation. You are limitless, we have limits and bounds. You are the purpose-giver and purpose-maker, we are assigned our roles and our place and called to live for your glory. Humble us so we believe and practice these things.

We thank you, God, that you are the Creator of heaven and earth.

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## Assurance

As we have trusted in Christ and confessed and repented of our sins, we should have a sense of incredible relief. That he has taken our guilt, He has paid our price, and He has really forgiven our sins. Listen to Psalm 103:8-14 and take it to heart:

Psalm 103:8-14 "The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

9 He will not always chide,

nor will he keep his anger forever.

10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

12 as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

13 As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

14 For he knows our frame;  
he remembers that we are dust.

\*For Group Discussion Questions in the Apostles' Creed sermon series, please refer to  
our study guide here:

<https://cdn.subsplash.com/documents/G7GNQD/source/1d774a86-9aee-4690-bb1e-f1f084e130d9/document.pdf>

## Works Cited During the Apostles' Creed Series (This is a Work in Progress)

### Christian Apologetics by Cornelius Van Til

This book takes into account the "noetic effects" of sin. That is, sin corrupts our minds and our wills, so that scientific and philosophical proofs alone cannot lead us to God. The need is for the power of the Spirit to overcome the circular reasoning of the secular worldview. This book is a needed addition to the above books because it provides an explanation for how someone becomes savingly convinced of the faith.

### Christless Christianity by Michael Horton

### To Everyone an Answer, edited by Beckwith, Craig, and Moreland

This book presents the case for God's existence, for Christ, and for miracles. It answers philosophical, cultural, and religious challenges to the Christian faith. 20+ authors each write in an area of their specialty in this edited volume.

### The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer

### Orthodoxy by G.K. Chesterton

### The Reason for God by Tim Keller

This book answers a number of common philosophical arguments against the existence of God, including the problem of evil. Keller's intelligent and humble approach is helpful for those who doubt, for those who are skeptical, and for the believers aiming to help both see Jesus more clearly.

### Reasonable Faith by William Lane Craig

This extensive work builds a case for the Christian faith starting with the existence of God, and then answering the problem of historical knowledge (which is important in proving the resurrection.) From there he explains who Jesus understood Himself to be, followed by an extensive historical proof for the resurrection of Jesus, and refutations of the claims against the resurrection.



The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self by Carl Trueman.

This book explains so much of how modern people think of themselves. It expands on the corrupt way of thinking that jettisons the past and strives to find the true self in an unencumbered state of nature as opposed to in glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. This seeking after the self finds its expression in many facets of the sexual revolution, and explains why our culture is the way it is in our day.

Signature in the Cell by Steven C. Meyer