

"Suffered, Died, Rose, Will Come Again"

Good morning Pleasant Hill! How was your week? I had a good week. Yesterday we had our first Saturday at the Smith's. I know it wasn't advertised very well. Mark your calendars because the second Saturday of every month from 5-11 we would like it if you and your family and friends would come to our home for a night of fellowship and fun.

We're in our 4th week of our deep dive into what we believe as the Church as we dig into the Apostles' Creed. It's been recited by the Church for thousands of years as a way to corporately confess what exactly we believe. As your pastor, I wanted to take time to slow down and make sure we all not only know what we believe, but know scripture that supports our belief.

Everything we know about God we know only because He's revealed it to us through His Holy Word. If we want to know our purpose we look to the Word of God to find it. If we want to know how to handle stress or grief, we look to the Word of God. If we want to know how to raise our children or love our spouse, we look to the Word of God. If we want to know how to love our neighbor and pray for our enemies, we look to the Word of God. All of life's answers are contained in the Word of God alone. That's why we affirm the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, or all scripture is infallible and perfect, God breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.

The Word of God alone should be the foundation that all Christians should lean into to support their faith. **Today we'll dig into the Word of God to share our belief in the gospel that Jesus died, was buried, He rose again and ascended again and will one day return to judge the living and the dead.**

With all of that in mind let's read the Apostles' Creed aloud together. Are you ready?
Here we go:

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

Today we'll focus on 4 lines of the Apostles' Creed. We'll focus on our belief that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. On the third day He rose again. He ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. In those 4 lines of the Apostles' Creed there are 8 things that we just confessed that we believe about Jesus.

We all just corporately confessed our belief in eight aspects surrounding the death, burial, resurrection and reign of Jesus Christ. Let's look at each of these one at a time. Let's start with our belief that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea serving under Emperor Tiberius. While the Jewish people were under Roman rule they were allowed to handle many day to day legal matters. They could also handle almost all religious matters on their own. However, if they wanted to put someone to death they had to go through the Roman governor to get permission to do so.

The suffering of Jesus under the hand of Pontius Pilate was foretold by Jacob as his life was coming to an end. He called all 12 of his sons to his bedside. **Genesis 49** records Jacob's conversation with his sons telling them what will happen to them and their descendants as history progresses. In **Genesis 49:10** Jacob tells them,

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

The word "Shiloh" is used in Jewish writing to mean "Messiah". The Tangrams, Talmud and Midrash all associate the word Shiloh with Messiah. Jacob was telling his sons and their descendents that the scepter or ability to make and enforce laws will not depart Judah until the Messiah comes to gather His people. **Genesis 49:10** is the first glimpse we get of the timing of the coming of the Messiah in Old Testament prophecy. When the Messiah comes, Judah will be ruled by another.

That's where Pontius Pilate enters the picture. When we say that we believe that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate we're affirming that we believe that the suffering or passion that Jesus underwent, the scourging, beating, and mocking were all authorized and enforced by Pontius Pilate. Nothing happened to Jesus unless Pilate approved of it. Let's read **Mark's** accounting of Jesus suffering under Pontius Pilate in **Mark 15** verses **1** through **20**. I'll give you a moment to turn there in your Bible. **Mark 15** beginning in **verse 1**.

"1 And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." 5 But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

6 Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. 7 And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. 8 And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. 9 And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. 12 And Pilate again said

to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" 13 And they cried out again, "Crucify him." 14 And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

16 And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. 18 And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him."

May God bless the reading of His Holy Word. Will you pray with me? Amen.

Heart wrenching. This passage brings me to tears. It's an accounting of my sins. I deserve to be mocked. I deserve to be scourged for my sins. I deserve to wear the crown of thorns because I have declared myself to be king of my own life time and again. And yet, my Savior, my King, my Lord bears it all for me. He suffered for me, in my place. You and I will never begin to understand how vile sin is until we see the consequences of it poured out on Jesus.

And we see that God set into motion those who would condemn Jesus thousands of years prior to His birth. God is sovereign. When we say that we believe that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate we're affirming not only that Jesus suffered but that God ordained it to be so, so that we could be saved.

Next we confessed that we believe that Jesus was crucified, died, was buried and rose again on the third day. The death of Jesus was foretold through the Passover lamb as the Israelites were being delivered from Egypt.

If you were with us during our Easter series, the passage we're about to read will be familiar to you. We also studied the Passover lamb in our "True & Better" series last year. Let's take a look at that text. Turn in your Bible to Exodus **Exodus 12**. We'll read **verses 21 through 27** together. **Exodus 12:21-27**, "**21** Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. **22** Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. **23** For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. **24** You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. **25** And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. **26** And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' **27** you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshiped."

God has always demanded innocent blood to atone for the sins of His people. Paul attempted to explain the death of Jesus to the Hebrew people in **Hebrews 9:18-22** when he wrote, "**18** Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. **19** For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, **20** saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.' **21** And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. **22** Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.'".

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Blood is life. Without it there is no life. So by Jesus dying and shedding His blood for our sins,

He's giving us His life so that we can live. The death of the Passover Lamb was a foreshadowing of the death of the final Lamb, Jesus Christ whose blood would cover the sins of all of His people delivering them from death into life.

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 5:7**, "*Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*".

Leaven, or yeast, is always used in scripture as a picture of sin. Where leaven is, there is also sin. A small amount of leaven will grow just as sin will continue to grow in our lives. Jesus cleanses out the leaven so that we are truly without sin through His sacrifice.

When we say that we believe that Jesus died, our belief is that Jesus died for a purpose. Jesus' death had meaning. His death was set into motion before the foundation of the world. Jesus' death was first promised in **Genesis 3:15** and throughout the Old Testament God promised to restore mankind's relationship with Him by sending Jesus to atone for the sins of mankind. When you say that you believe that Jesus died, you need to be able to explain **WHY** Jesus died.

I've heard people say, "I don't want anyone dying for me. What kind of God would send his son to die? That's barbaric!". If you can't clearly explain why you believe that they couldn't be more wrong and explain to them why Jesus died and His death is the most loving act of God that could be given, they will never understand.

The gospel hinges on the death of Jesus.

Without the death of Jesus there is no good news for mankind. Without the death of Jesus there is no remission of sins and we are all condemned without hope of ever atoning for our sins before a Holy, spotless, sinless God. **The death of Christ is the single most loving thing God has ever done for us and it's not even close.**

But praise God, our belief isn't just that Jesus died and was buried but that He rose again on the third day! Let's look into why Jesus being raised on the third day is so significant.

There are at least 10 people throughout scripture that have been resurrected including Jesus. In **1 Kings 17:17-24** we read about Elijah raising the widow of Zarepath's son from the dead. In **2 Kings 4:18-37** we read about Elisha raising a Shunammite woman's son from the dead. In **2 Kings 13:12-21** gravediggers saw a band of Moabite raiders approaching, and, rather than risk an encounter with the Moabites, they threw the man's body into Elisha's grave. Scripture records that, *"when the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet"*. In **Luke 7:11-17** we read about Jesus raising the widow of Nain's son from the dead. In **Luke 8:40-56** we read about Jesus raising Jarius' daughter from the dead. In **John 11**, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. And in **Matthew 27:50-53** we read about various saints that had died rising from the grave to witness to people about Jesus' power to give life from death. Even Tabitha and Eutychus were raised from the dead.

But only Jesus had the power to lay down His life and take it up again (**John 10:18**). Every single person who we read about in the Bible that was raised from the dead was raised by someone on behalf of God. Only Jesus was raised by His own power showing that He alone holds the keys to life.

When you and I confess that we believe that Jesus died and rose again on the third day we're confessing the gospel to the world. When we say that we believe that Jesus rose on the third day we're telling the world that life after death is not only possible but it's available to anyone who would confess their sins and believe in Jesus. Death has lost its sting to those who confess Jesus as Lord and live for Him.

As your pastor, when I ask you to follow our Lord's command to share the gospel with the world I mean that I want you to share with them the good news that they can have new life through the death and resurrection of

Jesus Christ. Without faith in Jesus' life, death and resurrection we face the judgment of God without a mediator. Without repentance and belief we face Jesus not as our Lord, but as our judge.

That's where we'll wrap up our time together today by examining our belief that after Jesus death and resurrection, "He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again to judge the living and the dead."

Turn with me in your bible to **Acts chapter 1**. We'll read **verses 6 through 11** together. **Acts 1:6-11** read, "**6** So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **9** And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11** and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

After Jesus' death and resurrection He came to His disciples. He was seen by hundreds of people. He led his disciples to Mount Olivet and had the conversation with them that we just read. They watched as Jesus ascended into heaven. I'm sure their minds were blown, I know mine would have been. I'm sure they were wondering, "Now what?". "What do we do now?". And two men stood beside them in white robes and made the most amazing statement to them telling them that Jesus will one day come again just as they watched him leave. So get busy sharing the good news until he comes again! Be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Share the gospel!

Jesus was talking with his disciples in **John 14**. Beginning in **verse 1** Jesus said, "**1** *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.*" **5** Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

We believe that Jesus will come again to gather his church together to be with Him always. We believe what we read in **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** when Paul writes, "**16** *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*"

We believe that Jesus is coming again. We believe that we can have victory over death. We believe that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us that where He is we will be also, not as servants but as children and friends. We believe that not because of anything we have done or could do but based on the blood of Jesus that was shed for us alone.

And lastly we believe that everyone will one day either meet Jesus as Lord or Judge. People have tattoos that say, "Only God can judge me" and to them I say be careful what you ask for.

In **Matthew 25 verses 31 to 46** Jesus was sharing with the disciples about the judgment. Look at that passage with me. **Matthew 25:31-46** reads, "**31** *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his*

glorious throne. **32** Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. **34** Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' **37** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' **40** And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' **44** Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' **45** Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' **46** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We believe that one day Jesus will judge the living and the dead. He says in **Matthew 25** that He will separate those who know Him from those who don't. Those who know Him will be given eternity with Him and those who don't will be cast into eternal punishment.

We read more about this moment in **Revelation 20 verses 11 through 15**. John writes, "**11** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. **12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

When we confess together that we believe that one day Jesus will return for his church we are also confessing that we believe that one day Jesus will judge all mankind who have ever lived according to what they've done. **If we really believe that then we'll be active and passionate about sharing the gospel.**

That's really the point of reciting the Apostles' Creed isn't it? By reciting our beliefs, by saying them outloud, it should motivate us to live what we say we believe. What I mean is, if we truly believe that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried and we've received grace and forgiveness because of his suffering death and burial then our life should be lived as a grace filled, loving believer. Jesus' death should open our eyes to our sin and the consequences of our sin. If you really believe that Jesus suffered for our sin, if you really believe that God's wrath was poured out on Jesus for our sin, then we should be living as people who hate sin and strive everyday to put it to death in you.

Likewise, if we say we believe that Jesus rose again and is seated at the right hand of the Father then we should live as if we believe that. Every single day is a blessing. Every single day we live our life it should be lived for Jesus because He reigns. Our actions should match our words. If we really believe that Jesus overcame death then we should live as people who are truly alive in Christ.

Finally, If we really believe that one day Jesus is returning to judge mankind and without the blood of Christ covering their sins then we'll be the most passionate missionaries who've ever lived. If we really believe that one day Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead we'll stop worrying about offending people with the gospel. If we really believe that then our knuckles will be sore from

knocking on doors. If we really believe that and have experienced the grace of God through the death of Jesus we'll give everything we have so that one more will come to the saving knowledge that we've come to.

Put simply, what we believe about Jesus coming again dictates what how obediently we follow the Lord's command in **Matthew 28** to go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us to do. If you've experienced forgiveness that changed your life, gave you a new start and a new heart, and you believe that anyone who hasn't experienced the same will face eternity in hell, how can you keep silent?

Church, saying we believe something and living like we believe it are two different things. Be missionaries. Be witnesses that rattle the gates of hell with the name of Jesus. Love people enough to share the gospel with them.

We're going to begin a time of response.

As always we come to this point in the service and offer an opportunity for you to respond to the Word of God because we believe anytime it's read, proclaimed and shared God moves in the hearts of mankind. So this is your opportunity to examine your own heart, your own mind and ask the Lord to search it and expose where He is working so you can respond to Him. I don't know what the Lord is saying to you, only you know that and only you can respond.

Maybe you'll respond by dropping to your knees and confessing sin and praying. Maybe you'll respond by lifting your hands in grateful praise to God for loving you and saving you. Maybe you'll respond by going to a brother or sister in Christ and asking them to pray with you. Whatever the Holy Spirit is calling you to do, do it. Respond to Him with an open willing heart.

The other alternative is to respond by hardening your heart. I want to caution you about that. When we harden our hearts sometimes God hardens them too. He allows our hearts to get so hard that we no longer feel the Holy Spirit move in them.

After you've responded to the Lord I want to invite you to take part in Holy Communion with us. The Lord's Table is set up. If you are a believer who has confessed the Lord Jesus as savior publicly through baptism we invite you to remember Him until He comes with us. Whether you are a member of Pleasant Hill or another body of believers, if you are part of the Family of God then you're a member of our family as well.

Will you stand and pray with me? Amen.