

ANCHORED: The Apostle's Creed | I Believe

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For the last 2,000 years, from the moment the Holy Spirit descended upon those early disciples and the Church was born — Christians have been under attack.

- Under the systematic annihilation of Christians led by Nero in Rome, or Ptolemy persecuting the church in Persia and Asia Minor, the destruction of Churches in Russia in the early 1900's, the seizure or destruction of property, imprisonment, torture, public excommunication, or execution of those that wouldn't renounce their faith.
- Even the internal attacks that infected the church through false teaching, heresy, or political hijacking during the crusades, or even the subtle modern western attack of comfort and convenience that has lulled the church into a sinful slumber.

Times of peaceful circumstances for the church are not the norm, they are the exception.

“Jesus promised his disciples three things—that they would be completely fearless, absurdly happy, and in constant trouble.”¹

~ G.K. Chesterton “*The Presence of the Father*”

The early church was a community of people so tightly knit together, so unified, that not even the gates of hell would prevail against it. A church that is fearless, impossibly joyful, and in constant trouble! **A church so “ANCHORED” in the Truth of this Word that the not even the greatest of powers of this world could take them out or slow them down!**

- This is how the church has not only survived, but thrived, in the crashing waves and storms that have raged against it.
- This is how after 2,000 years there are 2.4 Billion followers of Jesus in the world.
 - Because the church was so **anchored** in not only what they believed, but why they believed it — and nothing was going to knock them off of that footing or take them under.

We're entering into a time in our world, Grace Chapel, where if we don't learn from our predecessors' example, if we're not **anchored**, we're going to find ourselves, as Paul says in Ephesians...

Ephesians 4:14

...tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Over the next 6 weeks, we're going to get anchored!

*What we're going to use as our **framework** for this series is the **Apostle's Creed**.*

The Apostles' Creed has been used by the church for over 1,500 years to accomplish two things:

¹ Dick, Dan and Nancy. *31 Days with God for Fathers* (Barbour Publishing, 2008) p. 59

1. to keep the Church anchored, rooted in the Truth of the word of God
2. form believers more and more into the image of Christ

A few caveats before we jump in

1. **In this series, we're not preaching the Apostles' Creed, we are preaching the Bible.**

The Creed has no spiritual authority in and of itself, the only authority it has is what it has derived from the Scriptures.

- *So hear me, the Apostles' creed is a framework for this series, but Scriptures are the authority*

2. Now something else we need to understand about the creed, is that — whenever the Creed is read aloud in a community, it is simultaneously a *rebellion*, and an *allegiance* at the same time.

- It is a rebellion against the unbiblical ideologies of our day, and it is once again aligning ourselves, our allegiance with Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. It's a reminder that we are not ambassadors for the kingdoms of men, but the Kingdom of God.

3. In the weeks to come, we're actually going to read the Apostles' Creed *together*... but for today — I'm going to read it so you can just listen.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic* church, **PAUSE!** Before you send me hate mail and death threats, my first public act as the lead pastor of the church is not to make us catholic for goodness sake, *we're not becoming a catholic church...* the word *catholic* means *universal*, the *collective church*, meaning every follower of Christ in history is a part of the "C" church.

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

TODAY we will look at the first two words of the creed... "I believe."

Belief is more than just knowing something intellectually — **belief** leads to **action**.
If beliefs are anchored in the **wrong** thing, it will lead to wrong action — to **devastation**.
But if belief is rooted in **Truth**, in what is right, what is good — it will lead to **life**.

John 8:31-32

...Jesus said to the Jews who had **believed** him, “If you **abide** (anchored) in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.”

The Importance of Truth The Substance of Truth The Anchor of Truth

The Importance of Truth

Every year, Oxford Dictionary declares an international word of the year. In 2016 it was “**post-truth**.”

Today, there is the idea that facts aren’t important anymore — whether it’s a legal case, a political protest, or presenting evidence contradicting a current perspective or bias.

Today, as a society, millions of people in the same country are seeing the world through wildly different lenses and perspectives, and the foundations our lives are built on are so different from one another that **it’s actually difficult to agree on anything**.

In addition, social media, and immediate access to both *reliable* and *unreliable* information has caused all of us to **question the validity** of anything that opposes what we already believe about the world.

In the book *Habits of the Heart*,² Robert Bellah, a modern philosopher, describes the culture that we’re living in today as “*Expressive Individualism*.”

He explains that, *in the past*, individualism – your individual dreams, desires, beliefs, your faith – was at least rooted in some common agreement upon what aspects of life were important: your family, your country, tradition, community, truth. Because of that, individualism had its limits. *The human value of these different institutions kept our individualism in check*.

But *today*, to *sacrifice your individualism*, and your individual desires and dreams for the sake of anyone else — is viewed as *wrong, evil, and oppressive*. So, our heroic stories *today* are of people who have thrown off whatever they feel limits their personal individualism, to spread their individualistic wings and to fly without restraint.

EXAMPLE: A great example of this is the movie “*Babe*.” It’s the story of Babe, a little pig that wants to be a sheep dog, and everybody says, “No, you can’t be a sheep dog!” In the end the pig becomes a sheep dog. In the movie, when the pig finally begins living out his dream of being a sheep dog, it is a beautiful epic moment.³

- *You believe whatever you want to believe*, you be yourself no matter what societal, familial, or religious restraints are put on you — go and be free!

² Bellah, Robert Neelly. *Habits of the Heart* (University of California Press, 1985)

³ “*Babe*,” (Kennedy Miller Productions, 1995)

- That’s what many of us are thinking... “Why can’t the pig be a dog? *That’s inspiring!*”
- This is our view... *pursue your individualistic dreams and find freedom!*
- *Cast off whatever limits you — and shoot for the stars! **But here’s the problem...***

Proverbs 29:18

When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.

NIV says it this way... “*Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint*”

Another version says, that “*Where there is no vision, **the people perish.***”

In other words — in the **absence** of *vision*, of *divine revelation* — in the absence of **Truth** — we throw off anything that we might perceive as limiting — and run wild — **and it leads to our own peril.**

The Expressive Individualism in our culture today... the “post-truth” culture does *not lead to life, but to death — not to freedom but to bondage*, corruption, peril — not only as individuals, but culturally.

But Jesus 2,000 years ago says...

John 8:32

“...you will know the **truth**, and the truth will set you **free.**”

Jesus is telling us that

- first of all, there is a **universal truth** and
- unless your faith, your trust, your belief is **anchored** in that truth...
- *you cannot truly be free*
- **You cannot have the freedom you long for without Truth**

**Freedom and Knowing, trusting in,
and submitting to the Truth —
these two ideas are inseparable.**

The Substance of Truth

Personal:

Pastor Rob told a personal story of when he and his wife lived in Washington. After neighbors told of their brother’s heroin addiction and learned how Pastor Rob had overcome his addiction through Jesus Christ, their response was, “We’re glad you found your truth and that it worked for you.”

It wasn’t the right moment to get into a theological debate — but that’s a common sentiment today.
Your truth is your truth and mine is mine.

Jesus doesn’t give us that option.

What do you do with someone who comes along and says, “I AM THE TRUTH”?

Not, I am **a** truth that you can choose to accept if you want...

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Jesus doesn't say, "there is the way to truth," but "I AM THE TRUTH."
The truth is not a thing, it's a person."

How can Jesus claim to be THE truth?
Who would make such a claim?
Who would dare say all other truths, all other realities, bow to Me — I'm the ultimate reality.
I am the truth. Believe therefore, in Me.
Trust in Me. Anchor your soul in Me?
Who would say such a thing?

God would.

As the Creed says,
"God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

Jesus is saying — I am the reason for life. I am the Truth your heart needs to be free! Come to me. Believe in me. Trust in me. Anchor your whole life in me... and if you do, only then will you be free.

**It's not casting off restraints that brings freedom.
It's knowing ME that brings freedom.
Come to me
I am the Truth — and I will set you free!**

So how do we do that? How do we anchor ourselves in the Truth?

The Anchor of Truth

In John 5, Jesus is talking with these Pharisees.

John 5:39-40

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

What Jesus is saying is, "You don't understand the purpose of the Scripture. The scriptures don't bring life. They point you to life. They point you to me and I bring life!"

In this conversation, Jesus isn't referencing the New Testament, He's referencing the Torah, the Old Testament. Jesus is saying, "This entire book... is all about me! I am the point, I am the purpose, I am the fulfillment, the culmination of it all."

Jesus is saying, "You go to the Scriptures to find rules and laws, and you completely miss the Me! I am the point. I'm the redeemer, and restorer of all things. I'm the creator and author of all things. I am the Truth you need to submit your life to."

TODAY, *if you want to know Jesus...*

- IF you want to grow in your intimacy with Him, your knowledge of Him,
- of what He's like, of His character, His nature
- and what He's speaking to you today
- If you want to be rooted, anchored, stable and strong in the day of trouble...

Labor over the Scriptures... dive into the Word of God... not because they bring life, but because they point you to the One who is Life itself.

John 8:31-32

“If you **abide** (anchored) in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.”

What now?

I’m not anchoring myself in the Truth, I need to read the scripture more.

If you’re struggling to get in the Word consistently, don’t start by trying to decide “What you’ll read.” Instead start with *when*.

You are ridiculously in charge of your time! Make a decision on **When** you will sit down, just you and God, and open up His word. Is at night before bed for 10 minutes? Is it first thing in the morning? If you make that one decision today it will help you tremendously.

Once you have your time nailed down — pick a book. If you’re new to the Bible, don’t start with Job, or Leviticus... maybe go with Philippians or Galatians, or one of the Gospels.

But when you come to the Truth of the Word, come ready, expectant, heart soft, and ears open for God to speak to you.

**Because in a middle of a post-truth world,
a world with all kinds of competing ideologies and worldviews —
we must be people who are anchored in the Truth of God’s Word —
and in the person of Jesus Christ.**

Discussion Questions

1. Given today’s current atmosphere hostile to Christianity, does it give you a sense of place in history, knowing that “times of peaceful circumstances for the church are not the norm, they are the exception”?
2. What does our being a part of the holy “catholic” (SMALL ‘c’) church mean?
3. How do you perceive we are living in the era of “post-truth”?
4. What is the problem of living in today’s “expressive individualism”?
5. Discuss, “You cannot have the freedom you long for without Truth.”
6. What do you need to personally do to anchor yourself more deeply in the Truth?

NOTES