

ANCHORED: The Apostle's Creed | God the Father

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Last week we began a new series entitled *Anchored*, and we're working our way through The Apostles' Creed. Our goal is to get 'Anchored' in the Truth of the Word of God.

When you look throughout Church history —times of peaceful circumstances for the church are the exception — not the norm. The thing that has kept the Church strong, stable, and rooted over the last 2,000 years is the fact that they were anchored in the Truth. They knew what they believed, and why they believed it.

We're entering into a time, where if we don't learn from the example of those who've gone before us, if we're not **anchored**, we're going to find ourselves succumbing to the waves of a wayward culture.

TODAY, we're going to read The Apostle's Creed aloud together. What we established last week is...

1. **In this series, we're not preaching the Apostles' Creed, we are preaching the Bible.** The Apostles' Creed is a *framework* for this series, but Scriptures are the *authority*.
2. Whenever the Creed is read aloud in a community, it is simultaneously a rebellion, and an allegiance at the same time.
 - a. It is a rebellion against the unbiblical ideologies of our day, and it is once again aligning ourselves, our allegiance with God and His Kingdom. It's a reminder that we are not ambassadors for the kingdoms of men, but the Kingdom of God.
3. The *word catholic*, when we say, the *holy catholic church*, doesn't mean Roman Catholic, it means *Universal*, "C" Church, every follower of Jesus throughout human history.... That's what *catholic* means... GC is not becoming a Catholic Church.

We are going to read the creed aloud together, and reject the unbiblical ideologies of our day, and once again align ourselves with Jesus Christ, and His Kingdom...

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, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Last week, we talked about the importance of our being Anchored in the Truth of the Word of God. Today we're tackling that first article, the first line...

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

If you look at how Jesus responds to His disciples when they ask Him to teach them to pray in Matthew 6... Where does Jesus start? Jesus says, *"Our Father..."*

*When Jesus teaches us to Pray,
and when we read the Apostles' Creed,
the starting point...
the very foundation of our faith is built on the concept
that we are invited into relationship
with God as "Our Father."*

The Invitation of The Father

The Promise of The Father

The Wonder of The Father

The Invitation of The Father

In Matthew 6, before Jesus ever gets to "Our Father, who art in heaven," He sets it up in a really interesting way...

Matthew 6:7-9

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: "Our Father..."

Jesus says that the way we enter into relationship and communication with God boils down to two extremes — the Gentile or Pagan way — and a Christian way. Pagans were people that prayed all the time — maybe even more than anyone else at that time in history.

Jesus says the real difference in regard to our approach to God is not irreligious from religious — but the religious from Christian.

Pagans, who were very religious people, praying all the time, think they'll be heard because of **their many words**

- They think God hears them because they pray **eloquent prayers**. Or because they use a lot of **religious language**, or they repeat the same phrase 15 different ways — THEN maybe God will answer them.
 - *Church, **we pray like this all the time!** Because we have a wrong view of relationship and communication with God. **We think we're heard if we do or say the right things! That is religion.** This is a formalized religious obligation. And what does Jesus say about it? Don't approach me like that!*

Pagans babble on and on trying to be heard — but the invitation of God to every single one of us — is to approach Him as our Father.

Jesus poses a question to the Disciples — and to us...

- What is the cause for which you will be heard by God?
- By what basis, will God hear you?
- And welcome you?
- And converse with you?
- Ask yourself, why do you think you should be given access to God, the Father almighty?

Here's what Jesus is teaching them and us...

***Our activity for God
does not grant us access to God.***

If you approach God, religiously, like the Gentiles or pagans in this passage — you essentially approach God like he is your **boss**, and you're an **employee**. It's still a relationship, but it's a **business relationship**.

BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

In a business relationship, there are expectations of you in regard to your performance.

- Business relationships are **conditional**.
- If you're good enough, you get hired.
- If you perform well enough, you stay hired and maybe get accepted on a longer-term basis, but that could always change.
- If you do what's required of you, you get paid.
- If you perform better than expected, you might get a raise or a promotion, and then more is required of you, and expectations increase as well as your level of responsibility

However, if God is your Father, you're not an employee, you're family.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- **Business** relationships are **conditional**, **Family** relationships are **unconditional**.
- In a business relationship, if you perform, you'll be accepted
- In a family relationship, you're already accepted, and therefore you should perform.
- If you don't perform, you're still family, but someone has to pick up the slack.
 - And in some sense, this is what our brother, Jesus has done for all of us — He's picked up our slack.

No matter how dysfunctional your family is — nothing will ever change the fact that you're still family.

***A business relationship is based on what I do.
A family relationship is based on who I AM.
A business relationship is based on doing.
A family relationship is based on BEING.***

In the first paradigm, someone that approaches God and says, “God, come into my life, be my boss — I'll do my part, you do your part.”

In the second paradigm, it's *"God, come into my life, be my Father. I'm incapable of doing my part, but Jesus has pulled my weight for me. He lived a perfect, sinless life in my place, and was unjustly punished for my failures. On that basis alone, and all that Jesus has done for me, God be my Father."*

Church, how do you approach God?

Is your relationship with God cold and impersonal?

Do you go to God just because you're supposed to as a religious person?

Do you avoid God because you're afraid of His disappointment?

Are you irritated because God isn't holding up His end of the bargain with you?

You say, "I don't know even know why I'm praying — God never comes through for me.

I guess I haven't been a very good Christian. I must be an awful person."

Is that your life with God?

Is your relationship with him, anxious, cold, impersonal, mechanical —

or is it warm, secure, confident, loving, personal?

Is your relationship with God that of an employee or that of a child?

Do you see why this is so absolutely critical?

If you've never had a relationship with God — He is inviting you today, to relate to Him, to come to Him, not as a disappointment, not even as an employee — but to come to Him as a child, and allow Him to be your loving Father,

Matthew 18:3

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

The Promise of The Father

- Jesus does not start the Lord's Prayer, "Our King," though He is.
- He doesn't start the Lord's Prayer, "Our Creator," though He is.
- He doesn't even start the Lord's Prayer, "Our Friend."
- Do you know why? Because even friendship — to a degree, has conditions.

Why does Jesus, out of all the things that God is to us, start with "Our Father"?

The Fatherhood of God cuts to the very center and essence of what it means to be a Christian.

John 1:12

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children** of God.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

It means you've been adopted by God!

When you receive Christ, and you are all in with Him, your whole life — you're then adopted into His heavenly family! This is what it means to be a Christian.

In the adoption process, a child has very little control over their own adoption. It is not the result of their effort, but the effort of the parents. When you adopt someone, you are saying...

- *“I promise to regard you with all of the commitment, and all of the love, and all of the grace and kindness and acceptance I would show to my own natural child.”*

When you're adopted, your heavenly Father promises to you, *“You're no longer an outsider, you're no longer unknown to Me, you're My child. I love you with the same love I have for My own son Jesus. I will bless you as I bless My own son Jesus. I accept you even as I accept My own Son Jesus.”*

Do you get that?

Do you see that if you are in Christ, this is already true of you?

And if you haven't come to Christ — Give your life to Him —because the moment you do, this is true of you too!

If you think, *“That's just too easy. I can't believe it happens, just like that, just by giving my life to Jesus — I mean, it can't be that simple.”*

- That shows that you're approaching God as an **employee** and not a **child**.
- It shows that you're viewing God as a boss and not a Father.

A Christian is someone that says, “Jesus lived the life I should have lived, and was crucified for my sin. And upon His perfect life and sacrificial death, I base everything else about my life. Because the finished work of Jesus Christ has made me a child of God.”

Christian, when you pray, are you overwhelmed by the gospel?

That you, of ALL PEOPLE, YOU have been invited to address God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, as your Father?

What in the world did YOU do to earn that?

What could you ever do to earn that?

The Wonder of The Father

If God is your Father, you will have a sense of wonder about everything else in life.

1 John 3:1

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

A Christian is someone that finds the love of the Father miraculous, even unfathomable.

There is a spirit of wonder about that person.

But if you're just an employee — and God is your boss, you don't have this.

If you're an employee, you can ask your boss for things, but you would never spend 30 minutes of your life meditating on the greatness of your boss.

You would never just sit down and think about how wondrous and marvelous your boss is.

If you're an employee and you view God as your boss, adoration is unnatural, it's impossible!

If you approach God as an employee, and someone asks you if you're a Christian, you say "Of course I'm a Christian."

But if you ask a Christian, "Are you a Christian?" A Christian, a child, says "It's crazy, it's a miracle, of all people! I'm not even sure how, but it's true."

There is a sense of wonder.

If God ever does something good for you, and you're an employee, you think God is just giving you what you deserve, what you've earned from Him. You look at your paycheck and say, "*I earned this, of course I got paid.*" You have yet to face the depth of your own selfishness and sin, and you have not seen God as He is.

For the Christian, everything is a gift. Every good thing is a wondrous heavenly gift come down from our Father.

Conclusion

Are you a child? Or are you earning your keep?

Become a child, give your life to Jesus.

Be welcomed into the family — you'll never be cast out.

This is what it means to be a Christian — and for God to be Our Father.

The only person who dares to wake up a King at 3am for a glass of water is his child. What would be considered rude, shameless, and inexcusable for anyone else, is absolutely permissible for a child.

This is our invitation from God.

No other religion would DARE say, "Be shameless before God, go to Him with your whole self, all the baggage, cast your cares on Him, make your requests known to Him, pour out your heart to Him."

Other religions tell you, "You need to behave, you can never talk to God like that."

"Our Father" means trust — absolute trust, no matter what the answer is to our requests.

"Our Father" means we're not employees who must perform to be accepted.

"Our Father" means we're already accepted in Jesus, and we are His children.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between praying in a religious way and in a Christian way?
2. Why do you think you should be given access to God, the Father almighty?
3. "A business relation is based on DOING, a family relationship is based on BEING."
Is your relationship with God that of an employee or that of a child?
4. What does God promise when He says He "adopts" you?
5. With God as your Father, what is your personal sense of wonder about life?

NOTES