

# ANCHORED: The Apostle's Creed | The Church

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## Introduction

In our series entitled *Anchored*, we're working through The Apostles' Creed. The Creed has been used over the last 1,500 years to protect the Church from false doctrine and heresy and to form and unite followers of Christ around orthodox Biblical Christianity to be made into the image of Christ.

### Review

1. **I believe**— The world will tell you that truth is relative, but Christianity says there is a universal, objective truth found in the Person of Jesus Christ, Who says, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**" (John 14:6). As Christians, it matters that we are rooted in this one universal Truth, Jesus Christ.
2. **... in God, the Father almighty**—Our God is a Father Who is good, benevolent, and gracious. We are His children, fully loved and cherished. This relationship gives us boldness to approach His throne of grace at all times and in all situations.
3. **... in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord**—Jesus descended, suffered, died, was resurrected, and then ascended to the right hand of God to send us the Holy Spirit. This is the very essence of our faith. Only by surrendering to Him can we find forgiveness for the past, power for the present, and hope for the future.
4. **... in the Holy Spirit**—The Holy Spirit is our source and substance of power on this earth. When we are continually filled with the Spirit and the Spirit comes upon us, we can do whatever it is God has assigned us to do in this world.

### The Apostles' Creed

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.

Please note:

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 Scripture is the *authority*.
2. Whenever the Creed is read aloud in a community, it is simultaneously a rebellion and an allegiance. It is a rebellion against the unbiblical ideologies of our day, and it is a pledge of allegiance to God and His Kingdom.
3. The word *catholic* in *holy catholic church*, doesn't mean Roman Catholic. It means *universal*, and it is a reference to the universal Church, which is composed of every follower of Jesus throughout human history.

In Acts 2, those early followers of Jesus were gathered in the upper room, praying, and waiting, and at Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them with power, Peter preached a 3-minute sermon, and 3,000 people were saved. **The Church was born.**

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## The Church

### The Six-Circles Diagram:

Think of the church as a series of six concentric circles.

1. At the **CENTER** is Jesus because He is our Savior, King, and our Senior Pastor. If something other than Jesus is at the center, it's not a church.
2. Around Jesus is the **CORE**. These are the people who are all in for Jesus and this local expression of the body of Christ we call church. People at the core are fully committed to God and to what He is doing in and through the church body as seen in their service, connection to community, and participation in and giving to the church body.
3. Around the core are those who are **COMMITTED**. These people love Jesus and love the church, and they are maybe connected in groups but not serving, or maybe serving but not in community, or maybe doing both of those things but not giving. The committed are in but not quite *all* in.
4. Around the committed is the **CONGREGATION**. These people love the church, but they haven't yet committed to a community or to contributing and serving in meaningful and impactful ways.
5. Around the congregation is the **CROWD**. These people would also call the church a home, but in a very casual and occasional way. Maybe you're here when you can be or when you feel like it, but it's not a high priority. This group includes the CEOs (the Christmas-and-Easter-only crowd).
6. Finally, there is the broader, outlying circle of **COMMUNITY**. These are the people we want to bless, serve, and care for with love, grace, and truth so that they might one day experience the incredible joy of knowing and loving Jesus.

**Question**—Where are you in this diagram?

Everyone is somewhere on this diagram. Wherever you are, no matter your story, no matter your current commitment level here at Grace Chapel, we want you to take stock and move in!

**Take a step toward the center.**

**Here's why**—It's sanctifying. It's discipleship. It's growth. It's challenge.

***It's what you were created for.***

At Grace Chapel, we either want you healing or we want you helping. If you've been healing for 15 years, it's time to step up. Explore with us. Be a part of the body of Christ. Be known. Participate. Contribute.

**As we all do this together,  
God does something beautiful,  
miraculous,  
significant,  
dangerous,  
and world changing.**

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## **Keystones, Living Stones, and the Cornerstone**

**Personal**—I spent the first 18 years of my life living in southwestern Pennsylvania. I grew up just south of the city of Pittsburgh. Many of you probably did not know that Pennsylvania is called the Keystone State. Pennsylvania was one of the 13 original colonies. There were six colonies to the north of Pennsylvania and six to the south. Because of this centrality of location and the significant role it played in the political, economic, and social development of the United States of America, Pennsylvania calls itself the Keystone State.

### **Why Keystone?**

A keystone is the stone at the top of an arch that's shaped a little differently from all the rest. It's typically wider at the top and narrower at the bottom, and it's purpose is to hold every other stone in place and keep the entire arch sturdy, functional, and stable. Without the keystone, everything else falls apart. The keystone is central.

Now, the interesting thing about this is that the other rocks, without the keystone, are useless for the purpose of an arch. A rock on it's own is just a rock. However, when it's in alignment with, dependent upon, and leaning into the keystone, it finds its purpose and meaning. **This is much the same for the church!**

**When collectively we are dependent upon  
and leaning into the Keystone,  
we become something beautiful.**

### **Ephesians 2:11–22**

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building,

being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

- One evidence of God’s power is described in verses immediately preceding these (Ephesians 2:1–10). Paul writes about how God transforms **the individual**, healing what is broken, and making us new creations. This alone is miraculous, and this is what it means to be a Christian.
- The second evidence of God’s incredible power is described in these verses (Ephesians 2:19–22). Paul writes that God’s power is seen when He takes individuals who are totally different (economically, ideologically, culturally, socially, etc.) and brings us together under the banner of Jesus—the Cornerstone—and makes us ONE! He unites us as **the church**.

### **1 Peter 2:4–6**

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

- Peter writes that we’re meant to be part of a greater whole. God created us to be in a spiritual family. Christianity is more than just your personal relationship with God.
- All by ourselves we cannot stand, but when we are collectively in alignment with the Cornerstone—when together we depend on and lean into Jesus—He provides strength, stability, purpose, and significance.

**God is the Builder.  
Jesus is the Cornerstone.  
We’re living stones,  
being built into a holy temple,  
a dwelling place for the Spirit of God.**

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## **The Danger of Individualism**

We live in an incredibly individualistic culture, and we’re all very different in a variety of ways.

But Peter and Paul tell us that when we become Christians and when we get into the church—into the family of God—God makes available to us a power that turns us into a **new kind of humanity**. His power makes us **one**, despite all of our failings, our flaws, our shortcomings, and our differences.

**Consider**—Our culture—in fact, the world—tells us that we should live for personal satisfaction and fulfillment, regardless of what anyone else thinks or says. Find out what you want to do, and do it with all your might. That’s the way to meaning and significance, according to the world.

The problem with this idea is that if the greatest cause you have in life is to be fulfilled, happy, and comfortable, **you have nothing to live for except yourself. And that’s an empty and vain pursuit.** If your quest is to find personal satisfaction and fulfillment, you will always give up when things get too difficult or take too long or are even inconvenient.

Jesus, on the cross, arms spread wide in the ultimate posture of vulnerability, being mocked and abused beyond imagining, didn’t look down and say, “You know, this isn’t fulfilling me anymore, I’m out of here.”

**The greatness of Jesus is seen in the fact that His purpose was greater than His own life.**

**Jesus didn't live for His own fulfillment—  
He lived for yours.  
He died for yours.  
He gave His life away for yours.**

**Matthew 16:25**

*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

**Questions**—What are you willing to give yourself wholeheartedly to? What are you willing to die for? What are you willing to suffer for? What are your deepest convictions that you would be willing to go to prison? What do you really believe, with all of your heart, mind, body, and soul?

**Application**—Jesus Christ committed His whole life to us—He was radically inconvenienced for our sake—but many of us struggle with even the slightest inconvenience because we're living for ourselves. God calls us **living stones!** We're building blocks meant to be a part of a larger whole. On our own, we're just rocks. But in the hands of the Master Builder, Who is building this great wonder called the Church, we find meaning, purpose, and significance. This is the church!

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## **Conclusion**

Are you a rock out there on your own? Or are you built into other people in the body of Christ?

**Action Steps:**

If you're ready to take a step towards to the center—to get built in—here are a couple of simple ways to begin.

1. **Serve**—Over the last several months, we've had so many new families connecting with Grace Chapel on Sunday mornings, and with Easter just around the corner, that's only going to increase. We want to make sure we're doing our best in welcoming, serving, helping, and guiding newcomers in connecting with the Grace Chapel family. So if serving is the way God is inviting you to be built in, consider signing up for our guest services ministry:
  - Greeters—Welcome people at the doors with a friendly smile, and help our newest guests find where to go.
  - Ushers—Help people find seating while dancing in the aisle to worship music.
  - Parking Team—Direct traffic, keep guests from getting run over, and drive the golf carts to save people from unnecessary exercise.
  - Check-in—Help families get checked into classes. (You don't have to be tech savvy to do this!)
  - Welcome Team—Show new families where their kids' classes are. We have maps—you don't have to memorize the building.
  
2. **Join a Life Group**—As the church continues to grow, we need to be intentional about getting small, because life transformation happens in the context of relationship with other followers of Christ. This past year, people have been more isolated and alone than ever before, and God tells us in the book of Genesis that it's not good for man to be alone. Life groups are a great way to find small community within the larger church body.

The purpose of being built in is not to build Grace Chapel's brand or push some self-centered church growth strategy. **The purpose of being built in is to submit and surrender to the Master Builder so that He can do with us what He desires.**

**As we all lean into alignment  
with the chief Cornerstone Jesus Christ,  
and the Holy Spirit dwells in our midst,  
we become a powerhouse for the Kingdom of God.**

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## **Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the six circles of church engagement. Where are you on that diagram? If you're unsure, ask the Lord to show you and talk about it with mature believers who know you.
2. Why does it matter that, no matter where you are on the diagram, you take a step towards the center? Discuss the Biblical case for doing so and your personal experiences in doing so.
3. Discuss: Christianity is about more than just your personal relationship with God. Is this a new concept for you? How have you experienced this personally?
4. What are the two evidences of God's power, according to Paul? How do they work together? How are they distinguishable?
5. What is the danger of individualism? How does this concept run counter to the Gospel?
6. What are you willing to die for, if anything? What are you willing to go to prison for? What do you really believe, as evidenced by the way you live your life?
7. How is God calling you to be "built in" to the larger body of believers called the Church? How specifically can you take one step towards the center at Grace Chapel?

# NOTES