

# ANCHORED: The Apostle's Creed | The Life Everlasting

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## Introduction

Today is the conclusion of our series *Anchored*, where we've been working through The Apostles' Creed. The Creed has been used for the last 1,500 years to protect the Church from false doctrine and to 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 God has assigned us in this world.
5. **. . . the holy catholic church**—The church is a beautiful and significant part of God's Kingdom. God is the Builder, Jesus is the Cornerstone, and we are the living stones being built into a dwelling place for the Spirit of the living God.

### 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 against unbiblical ideologies, 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.

Today we're going to talk about the last part of the Creed—

## **The Resurrection of the Body The Life Everlasting**

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### **The Resurrection of the Body**

Paul addresses our bodily resurrection in nearly all of 1 Corinthians 15, and you are encouraged to read the entire chapter this week, but today we're going to focus on just a few verses.

#### **1 Corinthians 15:42–44**

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**Personal**—Have you ever experienced a time—this doesn't apply to the under-30 crowd—when you went to sleep feeling great, with no aches or pains, but you woke up the next morning, tried to get out of bed, and realized you'd pulled three muscles? This happened to me a few weeks ago, and I thought, "I didn't do anything but sleep! I went to bed and was fine, but I woke up and couldn't move!" Or perhaps you've reached that stage in life when you refer to your knees not as your right knee and your left knee and but as your good knee and your bad knee. Your body just doesn't seem to have the same resiliency it once did.

**Our natural bodies are perishing! As Solomon wrote:**

#### **Ecclesiastes 12:1–7**

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,  
Before the difficult days come,  
And the years draw near when you say,  
"I have no pleasure in them":

While the sun and the light,  
The moon and the stars,  
Are not darkened,  
And the clouds do not return after the rain;  
In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,  
And the strong men bow down;  
When the grinders cease because they are few,  
And those that look through the windows grow dim;  
When the doors are shut in the streets,  
And the sound of grinding is low;  
When one rises up at the sound of a bird,  
And all the daughters of music are brought low.  
Also they are afraid of height,  
And of terrors in the way;  
When the almond tree blossoms,  
The grasshopper is a burden,  
And desire fails.  
For man goes to his eternal home,  
And the mourners go about the streets.  
Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed,  
Or the golden bowl is broken,  
Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,  
Or the wheel broken at the well.  
Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,  
And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

**Consider**—Any physical healing in this life is temporary. It's *not* our eternal healing. It is beautiful, displays the power of God, and brings Him glory, but even so it is still just a delaying of the inevitable. When we talk about the resurrection of the body, we're not talking about the resuscitation of these bodies that are breaking down . . . praise God!

Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15:42–44** that what is sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable. A seed that is sown has to die in order for something new to be born—the husk has to be broken and to fall away in order for new life to begin.

**“Death is the prerequisite to resurrection; the new life God intends.”—John Ortberg<sup>1</sup>**

In other words, if you're a Christian, on the other side of death and the coming resurrection are no more back aches, no more knee problems, no more seasonal allergies, no more cancer, no more disease, no more social distancing, no more depression, no need for medicine, no mental illness . . . the list goes on!

## **2 Corinthians 4:16–18**

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- We don't lose heart, even though our bodies are aching and perishing, because we know what God is doing, and we know that He will do a complete work.
- When our ultimate healing comes, it won't be a resuscitation or restoration of the old thing. ***It will be a total resurrection into our perfect, imperishable, eternal bodies.***

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<sup>1</sup> Ortberg, John. "A Life to Die For." *Christianity Today*, July 13, 2012. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2012/summer/lifetodie.html>.

No other religion gives you anything like this. Ever other religion believes either:

1. The physical is evil and bad and we'll be rid of it one day, or
2. The physical all there is and there is nothing else.

**Christianity says that through our death and resurrection,  
we are given the physical and spiritual  
in perfect harmony forever.**

We won't float around as disembodied spirits—we'll dance, we'll laugh, we'll eat, we'll drink, we'll run, we'll play, we'll embrace and be embraced . . .

. . . and when we're raised into that **bodily resurrection**, we are raised into the **life everlasting**.

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## **The Life Everlasting**

**Reflect**—We all have memories of certain times or places that are nostalgic. When we look back on those moments, there is this longing in us to go back and revisit that time or place. But if you actually were to go back, it wouldn't be the way you remembered it, and it wouldn't satisfy the longing you have. In light of this, consider what John wrote in **Revelation 21**.

### **Revelation 21:1–7**

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

- Our good, gentle, loving Father will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4).
- There will be no more death, grief, mourning, or pain (Revelation 21:4).
- For the former things have passed away and all things are made new (Revelation 21: 4–5). There is no going back to things we long for—it's only forward into the brand new life everlasting made for us by God.

### **This is what life everlasting looks like!**

**Question**—Have you considered that what you believe about your future dramatically affects how you live your life today?

**Illustration**—Imagine two people were placed in separate but identical rooms and told, "For 10 hours a day, for a full year, you must assemble a table and then immediately disassemble it, and then reassemble it, and then disassemble it again, over and over." The person in the first room is told that at the end of the year he or she will be paid \$20,000 for doing this task, while the person in the second room is told that at the end of the year he or she will be paid \$2 million for doing this task. What do you think will happen?

After some brief period of time, the guy in the first room will say, “I’m not doing this anymore. I don’t need this! I can’t stand it. There’s no point.” And he’ll quit. The guy in the second room will say, “I don’t find this tedious at all. In fact, I’ll do it for a second year if you extend the offer again!”

Why these different reactions? These people are experiencing the same exact circumstances in two totally different ways **because of what they believe about their future.**

### **Historical Context for Revelation**

When John wrote *Revelation*, Domitian was the Roman emperor, and he was notorious for persecuting Christians. Those early Christians had their homes plundered and destroyed. They were sent into the arena to be torn to pieces by wild beasts as crowds cheered. Christians were impaled on stakes, and while still alive, covered with pitch and lit on fire. Christians were crucified, sometimes by the hundreds or even thousands, along the highways in and out of Rome so that people would see them as they came and went from the city.<sup>2</sup>

Though these early Christians suffered in unimaginable ways, they suffered with courage, hope, and even joy! There’s record of Christians singing hymns as they were being killed, praying, and forgiving the people who were persecuting them. They took the suffering, mourning, pain, tears, and death with such poise and peace that the more people killed them, the more the early Church grew.<sup>3</sup>

As Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, wrote, “**The more we are mown down by you, the more we grow. The blood of Christians is seed.**”<sup>4</sup>

**Question**—What gave them that courage?

These early Christians knew what their future held, and Who held their future. They had a living hope, not some blind wish, because they knew the reality of what awaited them on the other side of death. As Tertullian wrote:

It is our battle to be summoned to your courts and, in fear of execution, to fight there for the truth. But the battle is won when the goal of the struggle is reached. This victory of ours gives us the glory of pleasing God, and the spoil of eternal life. But, you say, we are vanquished. Yes, when we have obtained our wishes. **Therefore we conquer in dying; we seize the victory in the very moment that we are overcome.** Bound to a stake, we are burned on a heap of wood. This is the attitude in which we conquer, it is our victory robe, it is our triumphal entry.<sup>5</sup>

**Application**—While none of us is likely to be burned on a heap of wood, we all have things that weigh us down, things we’re not sure we can survive. But if you truly believe in the life everlasting, there’s nothing you can’t face here on earth. Nothing can destroy you. **Death does not have the final word.**

**In the life everlasting,  
all of our deepest longings will be fulfilled,  
and all of our deepest sorrows will be swallowed up.  
It is guaranteed  
by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

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<sup>2</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea. *Historia Ecclesiastica*. 323.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian. "Apologeticus." Translated by Henry A. Woodham. 1850.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Revelation 21:6

To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.

## John 4:5–14

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, **"Give Me a drink."** For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, **"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."** The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, **"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."**

- Jesus met this woman at the well who had a mess of a life. He said to her, "I can give you water that will satisfy you so deeply you will never be thirsty again."
- At first she thought He was talking about physical water, but then she realized He was talking about eternal life. He said, in effect, "I can give you a foretaste right now of the river of life the flows in the City of God."

Even now, we can have a foretaste of this living water, and Jesus says we can have it for free! How?

When Jesus Christ was on the cross, He said a number of significant things. One thing He said is, **"I thirst!" (John 19:28)**. We know Jesus wasn't experiencing just physical thirst, because shortly thereafter He said, **"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34)**. In that moment, Jesus was longing for living water.

***On the cross Jesus experienced the spiritual thirst that we deserve in order that we may have the water of life without price.***

It doesn't end there. Jesus didn't just die, He was raised again. "Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' **(Revelation 21:5)**. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and He is making everything new.

It's the death *and* resurrection of Jesus that allows God's children to look death and suffering squarely in the face and say, **"Give me your worst! The lower you take me, the higher you'll raise me. Even if you kill me, all you'll do is give me an early promotion to eternal life!"**

**The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ means that no matter what happens to you, it can only make you better.**

As English poet George Herbert wrote in poem *Time*:

For where thou onely wert before  
An executioner at best;  
Thou art a gard'ner now, and more,  
An usher to convey our souls  
Beyond the utmost starres and poles.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Herbert, George. *The Temple*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1633. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/herbert/temple/TempleFrames.html>.

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## Discussion Questions

1. What did Paul mean when he wrote that what is sown is perishable, but what is raised is imperishable? (1 Corinthians 15:42–44)
2. Discuss: When we talk about the resurrection of the body, we're not talking about the resuscitation of these bodies that are breaking down, but a total resurrection into our perfect, imperishable, eternal bodies.
3. Does what you believe about your future dramatically impact how you live today? How does knowing that death does not have the final word change the way you live now?
4. Discuss the suffering of the early Christians during the time of the writing of *Revelation*. Does it challenge or inspire you? How does their suffering demonstrate how great their hope was in the life everlasting?
5. Discuss: On the cross Jesus experienced the spiritual thirst that we deserve in order that we may have the water of life without price.
6. How does the death and resurrection of Jesus mean that no matter what happens to you, it can only make you better?

## NOTES