



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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PRAYING THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Apostle's Creed is the most widely used summary of Christianity the church has ever composed. It is one of the oldest declarations of the faith known to the church. This creed stands as a time tested, historically rooted, and Scripture based declaration of the basics of our faith. The writer of this creed is anonymous. We have no record of its authorship. It was not written by any of the apostles. It is called the "Apostle's" Creed because its contents summarize the preaching of the apostles in the New Testament.

This Creed contains the fundamental articles of the Christian faith necessary to genuine salvation. This statement of faith proclaims the great truths that should unite all believers. Church historian Philip Schaff calls it "the Creed of creeds." In *Creeds of Christendom*, he writes, "As the Lord's Prayer is the Prayer of prayers, and the Ten Commandments are the Law of laws, so the Apostle's Creed is the Creed of creeds."

The Apostles Creed has the virtue of being simple and brief. Its conciseness makes it more serviceable than longer confessions. As an evangelist, I travel regularly. I have learned to pack only what is needed. There is nothing

worse than unnecessary baggage. Unnecessary baggage is a burden not a blessing. The Apostle's Creed carries no more theological baggage than is strictly necessary. It is a simple and straightforward yet profound statement of the basics of the Christian faith.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Why do I need the Apostles' Creed? And what does it have to do with my prayer life?" First, this creed offers you a foundation for your faith. Can you define your Christianity? Do you know what you believe? Can you state and explain the basics of the faith? The Apostles' Creed is a short statement that can help you know the basics of the faith.

Second, it can help you guard against error. In the early church, this creed was needed to help expose error, especially faulty views of Jesus Christ. At first, Peter's great confession was sufficient, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:16**). However, error crept into the church and Peter's confession had to be amplified. What kind of man was this Christ, the Son of God? The creed helps us to expose the errors and defend the faith.

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The Apostles' Creed is also a powerful tool for prayer. You can use it to deepen your faith in God and your relationship to Him. It can renew and revitalize your praying. This creed can be used in a variety of ways in your prayer life. In this issue of *The Prayer Closet*, we will examine the Apostles' Creed and how you can use it in your praying. Space will not permit an in-depth study. Yet, we will summarize the truths of the creed. In addition, we will then show ways you can apply it to your prayer life.

What Is The Apostles' Creed?

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 Maker of heaven and earth:
 And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 Born of the virgin Mary,
 Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 Was crucified, dead, and buried:
 He descended into hell;
 The third day He rose from the dead;
 He ascended into heaven,
 And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father
 Almighty;
 From thence He shall come to judge the quick
 and the dead.
 I believe in the Holy Spirit:
 The holy catholic church,
 The communion of the saints:
 The forgiveness of sins:
 The resurrection of the body,
 And the life everlasting. Amen.

"I believe"

The Apostles' Creed begins simply but profoundly, "I believe." This opening reflects the biblical truth that faith in God is a personal matter. A person receives salvation through personal faith in God through Jesus Christ, "If **you** confess with **your** mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in **your** heart that God raised him from the dead, **you** shall be saved" (**Romans 10:9**, *emphasis added*).

"I believe in God the Father"

The Apostles' Creed does not permit belief in God as an abstract force. It simply but firmly

states that He is the "Father Almighty." This reveals that God is the personal God who reveals Himself to sinful people and wants to enter into relationship with them. He is the heavenly Father who wants to save, adopt, transform, and bless sinful people who come to Him through Christ (**John 3:16; Galatians 4:6; Luke 15**).

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"

The Apostles' Creed links the truth of God's fatherhood with His omnipotence. Our Father is the God of all power. He has created all things. By His wisdom, power, and goodness, He has made all things that exist (**Genesis 1**). Now, He is directing all things according to His holy purpose (**Psalms 115:3**). The God who created the world and governs it has a Father's heart. He loves His people and is able to make all things work together for good in their behalf.

"I believe . . . in Jesus Christ"

Jesus Christ dominates the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is one of the most succinct biographies written about the life and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Creed declares the foundational truths that we must know and believe about Jesus Christ:

"His only Son" – This phrase reveals His relationship to God the Father. Jesus is the only Son of God. He was sent by the Father to reveal Him and to carry out His will (**John 5:23, 8:19, 1 John 2:23**).

"Our Lord" – This phrase indicates Jesus' relationship to people. He is the Sovereign Savior that sinners must believe and yield to in order to experience genuine salvation. The word "our" implies a personal trust and surrender to Jesus for salvation. We must confess the same thing that Thomas did about Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (**John 20:28**) It is not enough to believe that Jesus is a great man, an excellent teacher of morality, one of the ways to God, or a powerful ethical example. He is Lord or nothing. You must bow to Jesus in true faith as the only Lord and Savior (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5**).

"Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the virgin Mary" – Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit (**Luke 1:35**). The virgin Mary gave birth to the sinless, unique Son of God, Jesus Christ (**Matthew 1:18-25**). Jesus Christ entered this world as one Person with two natures – divine and human. Conceived by the Spirit, He is fully God. Born to Mary, Jesus is completely and truly human.

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate" – Why does the Creed include this phrase? The Creed's reference to Pilate fixes the date of Christ's death. It provides a historical anchor for Christ's sufferings. It emphasizes the historicity of His death. Christ's death took place and the secular world is forced to confirm it. The Christian faith is deeply embedded in human history. This phrase also confirms the fulfillment of the prophecies about Jesus and His sufferings (**Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:3-10**).

"Crucified" – Christ died on the Cross. Both the Old Testament and Christ Himself predicted the ~~act and mode of His death~~ (**Numbers 21:4-9, Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22**). This phrase reminds us of the fact that Christ bore the sins of sinners on the Cross. He suffered as a substitute in order to provide salvation to sinful people (**Galatians 3:10, 13; Colossians 2:14**).

"Dead" – This phrase reveals that Christ paid the penalty for sin (**Romans 6:23**). Anyone who trusts in Him can experience forgiveness and eternal life.

"Buried" – Was it necessary for the Creed to say Christ was "buried"? The Bible takes great pains to say that Christ was buried. Each of the gospels mentions it. Why is this phrase included? It gives the assurance that Christ actually died. Skeptics have tried to explain belief in the resurrection by saying that Christ merely fainted. There was no resurrection; He simply regained consciousness. However, the gospels make it clear that He actually died and was buried.

"He descended into hell" – In **Acts 2:31**, Peter declares that God would not abandon Christ's

soul to Hades. For Christ, death, in all its aspects including the disposition of the body and soul, was only temporary. Three days after His burial, He emerged from the grave, body and soul intact. What happened when Christ was buried? A comparison of various passages suggests that Christ released the righteous from Hades and led them to glory in the presence of God (**Ephesians 4:8; Hebrews 11:40, 12:18, 23**). Hades is no longer the abode of the righteous who have died; it has been emptied of all but the wicked who await their eternal doom. The souls of those who receive Christ as Savior are immediately transported to heaven when they die (**Philippians 1:23**).

"The third day He rose from the dead" – Christ died but was resurrected. Since He was the sinless Son of God, death could not hold Him. He suffered, died, and was raised from the dead (**Romans 1:4**).

"He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty" – After the resurrection Christ passed through the heavens (**Hebrews 4:14**) into heaven itself (**Hebrews 9:24**). Christ ascended to a place but also to a position, "the right hand of the Father." Christ is now our priest, interceding for us and acting as our advocate (**Hebrews 7:26; 1 John 2:1-2**). He is reigning as Lord, directing His church and mediating the Father's plan for the world.

"From thence He will come to judge the quick and dead" – Just as Christ ascended, He will also descend (**John 14:3; Acts 1:11**). The return of Christ is the blessed hope of the believer (**Titus 2:13**). Christ will come back to the earth as the Judge. He will judge the wicked and condemn them to hell. He will acknowledge and reward the righteous. God has committed this into His hands and He will carry it out perfectly and completely (**John 5:22-23**).

"I believe in the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit is God. He is equal to the Father and the Son in power and glory. He is to be worshipped and glorified just as the Father and the Son. At first glance, all the third part of the Creed seems to say is that we believe in the Holy

Spirit and then, in five other points of doctrine. However, there is more. The listing of the five blessings immediately after the statement about belief in the Holy Spirit reminds us that the Holy Spirit brings these blessings to us. The Holy Spirit bestows these blessings on the people of God.

"The holy catholic church" – The word "catholic" in the Apostles' Creed means "universal." The church includes all true Christians in all times and at all places (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). It is meant for all nations, places, and time. The church is "holy" in that it is set apart for God and His purpose in the world. The church belongs to God. He will sustain it and bless it.

"The communion of the saints" – Believers are united to each other. Because of our union, we have communion. We can have deep and genuine fellowship with other believers. We share in the bond and blessings that come from being members of the church, the body of Christ. We belong to each other (**Psalms 119:63**).

"The forgiveness of sins" – The Apostles' Creed shows that God is the forgiving God. He has sent His Son to die for sinful people in order to grant forgiveness to those who believe in Jesus. Christ paid our penalty; now we can experience total forgiveness with God and acceptance by Him (**Romans 5:1**).

"The resurrection of the body" – Because of Christ's resurrection, all people will be resurrected. You cannot have one truth without the other. Christ's resurrection and ours are so vitally linked that if one denies the possibility of our bodily resurrection, he must also deny that Christ rose from the dead (**1 Corinthians 15:13, 16**).

"And the life everlasting" – The connection between the resurrection of our body and the life everlasting is obvious. The soul and body will be reunited and we shall live forever in heaven. Eternal life is the final chapter of the world's story – a story written by the hand of God. It will bring to an end all sorrow, doubt, grief, pain, and evil.

It will offer us everlasting joy and peace in God's presence (**Psalms 16:11**).

"Amen" – This means "certainly" or "it is so." This word "Amen" looks back over the Creed and says, "That's right. That's what I believe. This is what I truly believe."

How Can I Use The Apostles' Creed In My Prayer Life?

The Apostles' Creed can provide you with the opportunity for you to enrich and enhance your prayer life before God. It offers eternal truths to anchor and stir your prayer life. The following are some suggestions that you might consider in using the creed in your prayer life:

- *It can help you develop your praise of and thanksgiving to God.* Read and meditate over each of the phrases in the Creed. Ask yourself the question, "How can I praise God for each point in the Creed? What can I give thanks for in each point of the Creed?" For example, take the phrase "the holy catholic church," you can praise God for His grace and power in building the church. You can adore God for planning to create the body of Christ. You can exalt God for His saving power that brings people from all over the earth into the body of Christ through faith in Christ. You can thank God for allowing you to be part of the church. You can express gratitude for your brothers and sisters in Christ – in all denominations. These are just some suggestions for this phrase. Read and meditate on the Creed and praise and thank God for His person and His mighty works.
- *You can use it to make personal confession of your faith to God.* I have found it of great value and help to confess my faith to God. I openly announce and declare to Him my convictions. This honors Him and helps strength my personal faith. This was the practice of the psalmists (**Psalms 119:13, 46**). This can also protect you from the lies of Satan. Satan works through lies. Yet, truth overcomes the lies. By announcing our faith, we are standing firm against the lies.

During times of prayer, I will confess to God, "I do believe in Jesus Christ, Your Son and my Lord. I know that You sent Him. He came from You. I trust in Him with all my heart. I believe that everything Jesus said came directly from You." This honors God, anchors my faith, renews my convictions, and helps guard against the lies of Satan. You might consider openly confessing and announcing the truths of the Creed to God. Confessing eternal truth will bless you and change you.

- *You can use it as a prayerwalking tool.* The Apostles' Creed can aid you in your prayerwalking. You can announce eternal truths as you prayerwalk. This exalts God and challenges the lies of the enemy. It prepares the way for the gospel. You can also use the phrases to intercede for the people as you prayerwalk. You can pray for them to know and understand the power and work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
- *You can use it to intercede for your church.* I have often used the Apostles' Creed to pray for believers. I have asked God to grant them ~~certainty in the truths of the Creed.~~ I have pleaded with God to grant them conviction concerning these truths. An example is the phrase "the forgiveness of sins." I would often pray, "Father, I ask in Jesus' name that the believers of this church would know and experience personally Your forgiveness. Remove anything that might hinder them from this. Stir their love for Jesus because they can experience forgiveness through His work on the Cross. Enable them to extend that same forgiveness to others."
- *You can use it to pray for the lost.* The Apostles' Creed presents an outline to pray for those who need Jesus Christ. The following is a model for praying for the lost based on the Creed:
 1. A deep, personal conviction that God exists and has all power.
 2. A deep personal conviction that God is a Father who will receive them.
 3. Opening their eyes to see that Jesus is God's Son and the Lord who can save them.

4. That Jesus is the unique, only, and absolute Son of God.
5. That Christ actually suffered and died for sinful people.
6. That Jesus Christ rose from the dead in victory
7. That Jesus reigns as Lord and has almighty power.
8. That Christ is going to return and that he or she will stand before God in judgment.
9. That this person will experience the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction and conversion.
10. That the church is the body of Christ and that they need this communion or fellowship.
11. That they can experience true forgiveness and acceptance with God through Christ.
12. That they will be resurrected and spend eternity somewhere.
13. That they can spend eternity in heaven through faith in Jesus Christ.
14. That they will come to know the truth and have certainty in that truth.

Halloween And Prayer

In recent years, I have noticed something that amazes me. It is the greater emphasis on Halloween in our society. When I was growing up, Halloween received attention. You had the usual costumes and decorations. Yet, it never had the significance of Thanksgiving or Christmas – it was kind of a "bump in the road" on your way to Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Yet, it appears that Halloween has become a major holiday. Costumes and decorations fill stores. Homes are lavishly decorated for Halloween. The number of television shows connected to Halloween has increased – not only in number but also in gore and evil.

As Christians, we know that Halloween has its dark side. It is a time of wickedness and demonic activity. It is a time of celebration of the evil one and his people. The greater emphasis

on Halloween should motivate believers to take action especially during this time of the season.

Yet, what is the Christian response to Halloween? This time of the year offers the Christian a unique opportunity to pray. Halloween can be a time of renewing your commitment to seek God and advance His kingdom.

How can you use Halloween as a time to seek God and advance His kingdom? The following suggestions are offered to help you be active for Christ during this time. When the forces of darkness are celebrating, we must stand firm in the light of truth and hold forth the light of the truth in the midst of the darkness.

- ✓ *Throughout the month, praise and adore Jesus.* Jesus has overcome the evil one; He has sealed his doom and judgment through the Cross and the empty tomb. Throughout October, praise Jesus for His power over the enemy and His death and resurrection. Sing His praises as others rejoice in the works of darkness.
- ✓ *Make your home a house of light.* Darkness and Halloween go hand in hand. The darkness is symbolic of the power of sin and the devil. It also speaks of the blindness of those who are in bondage to the evil one. A church I served in decided to take a stand one Halloween. The members of that church strung white lights all over their houses and yards. Some constructed crosses and put white lights on them. While others had symbols of Halloween and its darkness at their homes, the homes of our members sparkled with light. In the midst of the darkness, they were offering light. People began to question why they had the lights on. It gave our members numerous opportunities to share Christ and His Word.
- ✓ *Go on the offensive.* Halloween should stir the heart of the Christian to go on the offensive. Where is Satan at work in your area? Where is he doing the most damage? Pray against His work in these areas. Ask for the Spirit's work in these areas. Pray for the removal of the evil and its replacement with righteousness. As Christians, we cannot respond passively. Let this time of the year, move you to commit yourself to pray for the

destruction of Satan's kingdom and the establishment of God's kingdom.

- ✓ *Re-commit yourself to putting on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:20).* The armor of God is the gift of God to the believer. He has given this armor for the believer's protection. This time of the year provides you a powerful reminder that evil is real and that we have an enemy. As you see and hear the sights and sounds of Halloween, let it drive you to put on the armor of God daily. Let this time of the year move you to appropriate God's provision of the armor of God.
- ✓ *Celebrate the Lord's Supper on Halloween.* While the world revels in and exalts the darkness of Halloween, Christians need to revel in and exalt Christ and His Cross. One of the ways that you can do that is by observing the Lord's Supper on Halloween night. It can offer a powerful time of worship and witness to the world.
- ✓ *Hold a prayer vigil on Halloween night.* You might consider having a prayer meeting on that night. The focus on the prayer meeting could be praying for the destruction of Satan's works and establishment of God's kingdom. You might also consider praying for those blinded and bound by Satan in your area.
- ✓ *Ask God to help you discern when the evil one is at work in your life and around you (2 Corinthians 2:11).* Plead that God will grant you the insight that you need to face and overcome the attacks of the enemy in your life.

Praying Against Satan's Work In Your Area

Satan is real and at work in your area. As a believer, you can stand against this work and advance God's kingdom through prayer. The Word of God reveals to us many of Satan's deceptive and destructive actions. God reveals these things that we might not be ignorant of his work and that we might pray against them. The following prayer guide can help you pray against his work in your area:

Satan wants to ruin believers (Luke 21:31-32; 1 John 5:18).

Father, protect the believers in this area from all the snares and traps of the enemy. Defend them from all his attacks.

Satan desires to hinder God's work (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

Father, remove all the obstacles that Satan is using to hinder Your work in this area. Take these away that Your will and work would flourish in this area.

He murders (John 8:44).

Father, I plead that You will bind Satan's murderous plans for this area. He wants to destroy life now and for all eternity. I pray that the people here will experience safety and eternal life.

He conquers (Acts 10:38).

Father, I ask You to deliver and heal all those who are under the power of the devil. I pray for You to set free all those who are in bondage. Send forth Your Word and power in this area and set the captives free.

He intends to establish his own kingdom (Matthew 12:25-27).

Father, by Your Word and power, destroy Satan's kingdom in this area. Dismantle and demolish everything that He has built and established in this area. Build up Your kingdom throughout this area.

He wants to destroy pastors (1 Timothy 3:7).

Father, I pray that You will strengthen and protect every pastor in this area. Thwart and destroy all the plans he has for discouraging and defeating the pastors in this area. Set the pastors in this area free from the bondage that evil one has placed in their lives.

He stalks (1 Peter 5:8).

Father, I plead that every believer in this area will be sober and diligent. Cause them to know that they have an enemy that is stalking them and seeking to devour them. Grant them victory in the daily battles of their life.

He tempts (Mark 1:12-13; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

Father, empower the believers in this area to say "No!" to Satan's temptations. Help them to fight against the evil inclinations that they find in themselves. Grant them the power to pursue holiness of life.

He steals the Word (Matthew 13:9).

Father, bind the work of the enemy in the lives of unbelievers throughout this area. I ask that the Word will penetrate their lives and bring them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Open peoples' hearts that that they might receive the truth and be saved.

He deceives (Acts 13:10).

Father, I ask in Jesus' name that Your truth will fill this area. I ask that Your truth will expose all the lies of the evil one. I plead that the people of this area will hear and believe Your truth.

He afflicts (Luke 13:16).

Father, I ask You to heal everyone who is afflicted by the evil one. I pray for You to unleash Your power into their lives and set them free from his painful and pernicious work.

He lies (John 8:44).

Father, I pray that the people in this area will believe the truth. Deliver them from being ensnared by any lies of the enemy. Fill the lives of the people here with the truth of Your Word.

Fervent Prayer and Better Sermons

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. During this month, churches have the opportunity to show their love and appreciation for their pastors. The most powerful way to express love and appreciation for your pastor is to pray. In fact, you can have powerful influence on your pastor. You can join God in helping your pastor preach with greater power and effectiveness. The following prayer guide can help you pray for your pastor's effectiveness in preaching the Word. Pray that your pastor's preaching will be:

- Spirit-directed (Ephesians 5:18)
- Word-centered (2 Timothy 4:1-2)
- Fruitful (John 15:16)
- Received and applied (James 1:22)

- Delivered from Satan's attack (**Matthew 13:9, 2 Corinthians 2:11**)
- Pleasing to God (**1 Corinthians 10:31**)
- Done in reliance upon God (**1 Corinthians 2:1-4**)
- Christ-exalting (**Galatians 2:20**)

Partnering With The Prayer Closet

The great need of The Prayer Closet Ministries is partners – partners who will pray faithfully and give sacrificially. In October, we have a special emphasis on sacrificial giving for this ministry. We would ask you to prayerfully consider praying for and giving to this ministry.

God has blessed this ministry with numerous open doors. We are seeking to build a prayer center that will focus on world evangelization and revival along with housing our ministry. We are looking to expand our CD and cassette ministry. We are working on developing our internet, radio, and television ministries. We are striving to develop new materials that will enhance and encourage prayer in the lives of believers and churches. We are developing the **Awakening In Mississippi** initiative that seeks to create a "prayed-for" Mississippi. We are laboring to produce and circulate the newsletter

across the globe. When this ministry began in 1996, I had no idea what God had all this in mind. Yet, He has provided this ministry with a series of unique opportunities. We want to touch the world for Christ.

Yet, the plain truth is that ministry costs money. We can't carry these things out without the prayers and giving of God's people. We have to have partners who will join us in this. We want to give you the opportunity to join us in touching the world for the Lord Jesus Christ. We want you to have the blessing of blessing the nations through this ministry. We want to provide you with the ability to reach out to the whole world.

Will you commit to pray for this ministry? Will you commit to give a sacrificial gift each month to this ministry? If you can't give monthly, will you consider a gift to help support the outreach of this ministry? Your help is greatly needed; your gifts will go to carrying out ministry. We are thankful for your giving and your prayers.

To become a partner or to send a gift, please contact us at The Prayer Closet, P.O. Box 278, Hickory, MS 39332, (601) 646-2295, www.prayerclosetministries.org. If you desire to partner with us, we will send out a **Partner Packet** to help you join us in transforming the nations for Jesus through the power of prayer!



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