



For the last four weeks we have been looking at the incredible resource music can be in our spiritual life. We have been looking at songs that we may have sung for worship that have deep spiritual truths that are rooted in Scripture. How through the music they can connect with our souls in a more primal way, and be available to us in times of crisis and seasons of uncertainty, like we might be experiencing now. What songs might be in our Worship or Spiritual Playlist.

The first week we looked at songs that remind us how God turns the tables, takes what looks like defeat, and turns it into victory. This can give us hope when things look bleak in our lives. *"How marvelous! How wonderful!//And my song shall ever be://How marvelous! How wonderful//is my Savior's love for me!"*

Then, we were reminded of our constant need for God, not merely a couple of hours on a Sunday morning or the period of time we might cordon off to do a devotional or read a couple Bible verses. "I Need Thee Every Hour," not just sometimes or when it's convenient. It's all the time, constant and continual.

And last week, we could feel the deep relief with the call from Jesus to come and rest in him. Jesus goes with us on our journey, and we can approach him about anything large or small.

This week we are remembering what it is that we believe as followers of Jesus, not merely as a man with an ethical code that we might emulate, but as someone special who did the extraordinary for us that makes him worth following, before all others. There are songs that help us remember these essential things. One of the things the Early Church did to help people remember the essentials was creating The Apostles' Creed. It has been read or recited in worship services and before baptisms since at least the 4th Century. Of course, that was in Latin. Let's say an English translation together.

*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 to the dead.
The third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sits at 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 universal church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Why is it important? What does it tell us? How does it help us in our life of faith? These are the questions that we will be looking at today through our worship. Our opening hymn doesn't mimic the Apostles' Creed exactly, but it does remind us of the tenets of our faith. Will you sing with me "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High."

*** Opening Hymn** "Lord I Lift Your Name on High" – FWS #2088

Lord I lift your name on high
Lord I love to sing your praises
I'm so glad you are in my life
I'm so glad you came to save us

You came from heaven to earth, to show the
way
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to
the sky
Lord I lift your name on high

Scripture 1 Corinthians 15:3-6
Sermon *The Worship Playlist/Mixtape: I Believe*

Have you ever made up your own lyrics to songs? Maybe they sound like what you hear, but they aren't the right words. There are some famous classically wrong lyrics like Elton John's "Hold me closer Tony Danza." Oh no, I meant, "Hold me closer tiny dancer." Or, the Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams are made of... cheese"... Wait. "Sweet Dreams are made of this." Bob Dylan is notoriously hard to understand. Some people think that one of his lines in "Blowin'

in the Wind” is “The ants are my friends, and they’re blowin’ in the wind.” Instead of “The answer my friend, is blowin’ in the wind.” Sometimes, a lyric can sound like gibberish, and you might think that it is a part of the song, like "scatting" in jazz. I recently found out that a line that I never could understand in the song "Twilight Zone" by Gold Earing has actual lyrics. Why ruin it with lyrics? ☺

Just as people sometimes misunderstand song lyrics, so they also sometimes misunderstand belief systems. On occasion, people can get mixed up, so that it becomes like the lyrics in a song. It *sound* like Christianity, but it isn’t the same. That is one of the reasons for the creation of things like the Apostles' Creed in the first place.

The Early Church struggled with misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Christianity. One problematic group was the Gnostics. Some considered themselves Christians. Some did not. To that group everything physical was corrupted and bad. Only the spiritual could be pure. There were special people (within their group, of course) who claimed to have “secret” knowledge of God that was not in Scripture. Christian Gnostics claimed that Christ was never really human at all but only appeared that way. It was in response to things like this that the Apostles' Creed was created, and you can see how the writers spent so much of it highlighting Jesus' humanity as a person who was born, lived, and died. When Christians understand these points, they are less likely to listen to teachings that refute that. It also works against drifting away and saying something that *sounds* right, but is actually quite different ... like those song lyrics. Or a religious version of the telephone game.

Scripture includes creed-like passages too. You will see a direct connection to the Apostles' Creed in our passage from 1 Corinthians 15:3-6. Hear the Word of the Lord:

[The Apostle Paul writes,] 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

**The Word of Life.
Thanks be to God!**

Was there one thing, one moment, that made you realize that you believe in God, in Jesus? For me it was these 500 witnesses. For others, it can be the way the prophecies of the Bible all the way from Genesis came to pass, especially as they came to pass through Jesus. Some of you might have grown up in the faith and have always felt like you believed. You many have grown

up in it and decided to go away for a while. Explore other options that the world offers and then have returned, or you may still be thinking about it and working it out, still searching. Not sure, but still seeking. All of that is okay. It is part of the journey of faith, and really the journey of life.

But what is it?! What is it that Christianity - people who follow Jesus going on 2021 years now. What is it that we believe? So much of what we might call “essentials” are summarized in the Apostles' Creed. It's not “secret” knowledge, and this knowledge is available to everyone.

And why? Why is it important that we know this? So we have a firm handle on this truth and won't be distracted by things that sound similar.

- We have God Almighty, meaning all knowing, all powerful, and absolute in God's power, love, and mercy.
- And the Son as part of the Godhead, but also very much a human who was born, died, and was buried.
- That the resurrection happened.

This is what our hat of faith hangs on. On the third day, he rose from the dead.

A little further in the Scripture passage, Paul goes onto say, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins [and therefore eternally separated from God] ... *If only for this life* [emphasis mine] we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead." (1 Cor 15:17, 19-20a)

Our belief and our actions are more than simply following the teachings of a wise, kind hearted man. Jesus' teachings could be a good basis of philosophy of life. Some religions are based on the teachings of a wise person, Confucius for example.

The question is WHY do we follow Jesus? Why do we believe what we believe and do what we do? Are we simply a group of people that want to do nice things for people? Or is there something more?

Know your why? We've talked about it before, but in this current season, it's worth thinking about again. Why is Jesus worth following? Because on the third day he arose.

Lots of people have died. Lots of people died in the service of a good and noble cause. History books are full of them. Jesus was different. He came back ... for us. And that's why ...

Why we can believe.

Why we can believe what he said and what he promised. That he will be with us always to the end of the age. (Mt 28:20)

Why we can trust him when he teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. (Mt 5:44)

Why it is important when he says *as you did it for the least of these, you did it for me.* (Mt 25:40)

Because I believe

These are our anchor. This is why we are the church. Why we worship. Why we gather *this way* even when we are not able to gather in person.

And it is why we continue to try to build our connection together, to lift each other up in prayer and encourage each other through this season of the world.

I believe.

Our next song our next nomination for the Spiritual Playlist was written to help us remember what it is that we believe. It uses the Apostles' Creed and sets it to music. When we sing the song, "This I Believe," we are declaring the truth of who God is and what God has done for the world. We are also joining with believers, Christ followers, across the world and across the centuries in proclaiming this truth.

Will you join me in perhaps learning this song, "This I Believe."

Amen!

Song "This I Believe (The Creed)" by Ben Fielding & Matt Crocker

Our Father everlasting
The all creating One
God Almighty

Through Your Holy Spirit
Conceiving Christ the Son
Jesus our Savior

Refrain

I believe in God our Father

I believe in Christ the Son
I believe in the Holy Spirit
Our God is three in one
I believe in the resurrection
That we will rise again
For I believe in the name of Jesus

Our Judge and our Defender
Suffered and crucified
Forgiveness is in You

Descended into darkness
You rose in glorious life
Forever seated high

(Refrain)

I believe in You
I believe You rose again
I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord
I believe

And I believe in You
I believe You rose again
I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord

(Refrain) 2x

For I believe in the name of Jesus
For I believe in the name of Jesus

We believe in love, Jesus

I believe in life eternal
I believe in the virgin birth
I believe in the saints' communion
And in Your holy Church
I believe in the resurrection
When Jesus comes again
For I believe, in the name of Jesus

Come on!

(Refrain) 2x