



The Creed

Part 2 – I Believe in Jesus Christ

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We're in Part 2 of series we're calling *The Creed*. We're going over the Apostles' Creed over seven weeks. We're using the Apostles' Creed as an outline as we explore the scriptures for our essential beliefs, the beliefs we hold true as a church, what unites us as a church. The word *creed* means "I believe," and today we are into Part 2.

Last week, we looked at "I believe in God the Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth." Today, we move into "...and Jesus Christ his son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary."

This morning, while I was getting ready, I took my phone and I sat it on the counter and I pressed play and repeat on Rich Mullins' *Creed*. If you're wondering what the song was at the end of last week's service, that was Rich Mullins' *Creed*. I pressed play on the phone and I was getting ready. I was probably into the third or fourth time through that song, and then I was just getting ready to come to church. I couldn't find my phone. I did that thing where... We live in our home by this idea that it ain't lost until Momma can't find it. How many of you know what I'm talking about?

Whenever you hear Amy's name invoked around our home it's because we're trying to find something. So, I start screaming for Amy and he goes, "What?" I go, "I gotta have my phone; where's my phone? Can you help me find it?" I'm walking around the bedroom, "Listen, I hear the music." I hear the music playing loud and clear. I do laps around the bedroom, laps around the master bathroom, laps around our closet and I'm like, "I can't find it!" I spent six minutes doing this and then I pulled it out of my back pocket. Amy came in with that face that says, "We're going to have to start looking at those assisted living homes sooner than I thought."

Raise your hand if you've ever been asking a spouse where your glasses are and they're on your head. Don't judge me; this happens all the time.

Russel, our sound engineer, was gone last week when we started this series and I walked up to him today and I go, "Hey, Russel." He goes, "What is going on! I was gone and I come back to Woodland Hills Catholic Church." Russel grew up catholic. He said, "We recited this creed. Why are we going through this?" I walked through with him what we looked at last week and Russel, you can find our service online on Vimeo at woodhills.org if you'd like to catch up with Part 1.

We're going to jump right into the story because today there's a lot to cover, but I feel like we're still in this introductory mode as we look at the Apostles' Creed. I still feel like we need to answer a lot of questions like "Why go through the creed." As we move into Part 2 of *The Creed*, we're still going to give the reasons why we are going through The Creed.

I want to pick it up in Luke 1, as we dive into this story and as we dive into the narrative behind the Apostles' Creed section that we're covering today. **30** *But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

34 *"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

35 *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*

In Matthew 1, moving from Luke, the angel is now speaking to Joseph: **21** *"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

Today, in *The Creed*, we are going to put Mary in her rightful place. If you grew up in a catholic church, you need to understand this about Woodland Hills Family Church. We do not, nor will we ever worship Mary at Woodland Hills. She gave birth. She conceived by the Holy Spirit – "born of the Virgin Mary" – but she is not part of the Trinity. She is not God. She was used in a mighty way in the story we often just look at during Christmas, but today, we are going to see how it's part of our faith.

The Apostles' Creed that originated around 140 AD... Councils were common of that day and in Acts 15, you can read about the Council of Jerusalem where they got together to discuss the issue of circumcision. In 325 AD, we have the Council of Nicaea. They got together because there was a heresy that was circling the church. The big idea there was the relationship between Jesus and God. Many were saying that Jesus was not God. "He's fully human, but not fully God." So, this is where we get the Nicene Creed. When you read the Nicene Creed, you see it goes into a little bit more depth. If you ever wondered why there is so much more detail in the Nicene Creed versus the Apostles' Creed, it's because they were dealing with false teaching.

We're going to look at a lot more passages today, but I want you to turn to Colossians 2 because that's really where we are going to camp out and that's really the text we want you to leave here with today, understanding the importance of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The key there – don't lose the two words, *our Lord*, because if I were to stand before you today and say, "I want you to congratulate me, Woodland Hills, because I've been 90% faithful to my wife." You would say, "Your fired." You demand of me 100% faithfulness to my wife. When we say Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord, we are declaring, we're drawing a line of allegiance and saying, "We will be 100% faithful to our Lord. He is our Lord." We are declaring that as a body together.

Remember when Jesus asked the disciples... We looked at this last week and so this is more, again, part of the introduction. Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" There has always been

confusion in the world about who Jesus is. When Jesus was upon the earth, he wanted his disciples to be able to answer this question. He started with, "Who do people say that I am?" In Matthew 16, we read: ***13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"***

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" "When asked about me, what's your answer?" That's why we're doing this series, so that when you're asked about your faith in Jesus Christ, you're able to give a clear and solid answer.

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." No question. You are fully God and fully man. You are part of the Trinity. You are one of three. He is declaring a statement here that sometimes we just kind of breeze past.

Last week, we looked at the good, better, best. We're kind of bringing that in today, now speaking just of Jesus.

It is *good* that you believe in Jesus. You'll hear a lot of new Christians say this and we're hoping not to hear those who have professed faith in Jesus for 20 or 30 years still just saying this when asked about Jesus. We said let's move on from there.

It's *better* that you know what you believe about Jesus. What doctrine of the faith do you have that is at the core of who you are. What do you know about Jesus and can you proclaim that when asked?

It's *best* that you live like Jesus.

The Creed unites us, it brings us together. Pastor John Piper puts it this way: "*Christianity that is unified around a written confession of faith, at its best, is the best Christianity. It is a good thing for a people to be united around a written summary of biblical truth.*" And that's what The Creed is; it's a written summary, a concise statement of what we believe.

This summer, one of my favorite things to do with my son is paintball at Kanakuk Family Kamp. I absolutely love it. It's like two hours of being a warrior. I understand I'm not one. Let me just make that very clear for all of you who serve. But, when I walk off the battlefield of paint ball, the first thing we do is talk about our veterans because we don't know how they did this. We're doing this as play, but when this is real, this is real.

I did it a couple of times this summer. I sneak in and act like I'm part of another term when I haven't paid. But, I'm there one term officially as a speaker for term four. Carson and I did it two days. The first counselor... Again, this is what I love about college students running camps. They have rules, but... Anyway... You don't want too many rules on the paintball field. He gave us about five minutes of instruction and rules and then we went out and had a blast.

Well, in term nine, I was invited back... I invited myself back to term nine. I wanted to go do it again. Our friend Chad Mason was there. Carson and I joined Chad Mason. We get there and obviously the first counselor who didn't really have good rules wasn't there anymore. You could tell that because the next guy gave us 40 minutes. Chad, am I making this up? It was literally 40 minutes of rules before we stepped onto the paintball field. This guy was serious and we were going to follow the rules.

I'm great with rules. How many of you love rules? I love rules because we know how to play the game. I don't want to play Monopoly where everyone has their own rules. This is why I don't play with some of you because I hate it; I can't stand it. We've got to have rules.

This guy gave the rules, so I knew the rules clearly. There are a lot of rules: you can't shoot them from 15 feet away, you have to yell surrender, and if the guy says surrender, it's over. I mean it's just set in stone rules.

We get onto the field. Now this is the part I hate. A couple of the dads started calling me Pastor in an effort to make me weak. Let me tell you... it doesn't work on me. Pastor emboldens me, if anything. There's this one dad who had to have been a Navy Seal or in the Marines. You could tell from his posture, his strategy; his technique was awesome. He was on the other team, so being the somewhat cocky, athletic, person that I want to be, I decided to target him. I want to be able to say I took out a Green Beret.

You have about 100 to 150 rounds in your hopper and I had my sights on him. I couldn't hit him. He was a Ninja Navy Seal. He was bounding back and forth. I'd see just a little part of him and I would unload 30 or 40 rounds on him; I couldn't touch him. He's advancing up the course and I'm yelling to the kids, "HE'S COMING!" And you know if you have little kids behind the barricades, they stand their shaking with their guns. If you've ever done paintball... I'm not kidding. You think it's fun. It's intimidating because those things hurt. I think I still have a little bit of the bruise. I've got bruises all up and down the right side of my body because the Navy Seal broke the rules. Wait, wait... Chad is my witness. Chad is nodding.

The Navy Seal got so close. Carson and Mason are... I always love this. In the first term, we did this. I ran up on four kids and yelled, "SURRENDER," and before I could finish the word *surrender*, they had their guns in the air and they were shaking, yelling, "WE'RE DONE, WE'RE DONE!" They hadn't shot a round.

This guy came around and pegged me right in the side. I yell, "I'M DONE" after one shot. This was the rule. After one shot, you're done and you yell out. I played by the rules. I yelled, "I'M OUT." I even added to the "I'm out" with a "good shot" because I wanted him on my team for the next round; that was really what I was doing. I yelled to him, "GOOD SHOT!"

With my gun not pointed at him, saying "I'm out" and "good shot," he lit me up down my right side. I can't show you, but it's all down this side and they all look like this one on my arm. They're these big bruises. I throw the gun, because this is what you would do in battle if someone is coming at you; you throw your gun. I don't want it any more. This is why I wasn't in the Army, right? I throw the gun and I said, "I SAID I'M OUT!" Carson and Mason started yelling, "HE'S OUT! HE'S OUT!" And they're not caring about me; they don't want him swinging around and taking them out.

I throw the gun and I'm kind of shaky because I'm in deep pain. And the ref... The 40-minute instruction counselor from University of Illinois, looks at me and says, "Settle down, Pastor." I said, "Settle down, Pastor? Tell the Ninja Navy Seal over there to settle down!"

I walk off the course, set my gun in the back of the truck they had, and I took a walk. Mason tells Carson, "I don't think he's coming back." I told them later, "I'm AWOL; I'm out of here..." I had to cool off. I can't explain to you, but your adrenaline is going and you're fired up. Are there any warriors in here that know what I'm talking about? No. So, it's just me up here. Chad, raise your hand because you were there with me.

I got back and here's all I asked... And I did it in a very soft, passive/aggressive way, okay? I said, "Have the rules changed? If we got new rules, just let me know. If there are new rules, it changes how we play!" Who said, "right?" Do you want to go to lunch after this? You and I are going to hang out because you're understanding what I'm talking about. The rules were very important. They taught us how to play. And this guy went on his own.

I woke up at 2:00 am, going I did it all wrong. I shouldn't have thrown the gun. I should have charged him. I should have lit him up. I'm getting amens now on this from the front row. I should have made him regret the day he ever stepped on the paintball field with me.

The counselor goes, "No, no, no guys, we do, we need to get back to the rules and play by the rules," because the rules are what will keep us all friends at the end.

Afterwards, the guy says to me, "Hey, you know we visit your church every time we come down from Joplin. We watch you online."

Navy Seal, you watching right now? You paying attention to the message? Because the next time you show up on this campus, I have instructed our security team... They won't have their normal weapons, but they will have paintballs. We will light up your vehicle and we will light up you and let me tell you what we are going to do to the ultimate end of this. You are going down in a way that you have never gone down, my friend. Are we clear on this, Navy Seal from Joplin? Are we clear?

Okay, that's all I had to do to make sure he gets it. Okay. I didn't even plan on doing that, but it felt... That was of the Holy Spirit right there. That was teaching someone how to live by the rules. Let's collect ourselves for a second.

This is why The Creed is so important. They are not rules; they are belief. They're greater than rules. They're at the core of who we are. And we're not called as a church to ever change our essential beliefs. They started us, they will keep us, and they will take us to the end. May we never be a church that changes what we believe. The world is changing at a rapid pace. Don't let that convince you or tell you that you should be changing what you believe at the core of your faith; that stays strong.

When you start changing that, it changes the way you... I'm going to use the word *play* to stick with the illustration, but it's going to change the way we live. Don't change what you believe.

So, the bottom line is **The Creed summarizes our essential beliefs**. When the Apostle Paul was saying goodbye to the elders in Ephesus, he stood up and he said... I want to focus on one term in Acts 20 that he uses. **26** *“Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you.”* He’s saying, “I’m able to leave here free from concern that I didn’t speak well or that I didn’t proclaim the truth.

27 *“I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”* I have a lot of friends that would say that the only way you can get “the whole counsel of God” into believers is by teaching the Bible verse by verse. But “the whole counsel of God” is not implying or not directly speaking to that because we didn’t have a concise Bible at the point this was shared. This isn’t speaking of verse by verse. Here’s what it’s speaking to and most scholars agree on this. **The whole counsel of God means a unified summary of essential biblical truth**. It’s what holds us all together.

So, I want to make sure, as the lead teaching pastor here, when teachers stand up to proclaim before you... home groups... that we stay true to essential beliefs. The Creed not only summarizes our essential beliefs; it clarifies them. **In our essential beliefs, we have unity**, which means this creed is what brings us together. If we are all going to live out what we believe... That’s why we sang what we believe a moment ago, what we hold to be true.

In our non-essential beliefs, we have liberty. So, we don’t focus on the minor so much around here. Some of you have very different opinions on dress. Some of you have very different opinions on food or wine. Some of you have different opinions on music. Some of you have different opinions on whether or not we should recite The Creed every week. Some of you have opinions on the fact that we should do the Lord’s Supper every Sunday. Some of you like it every other Sunday. Some of you like it once a month. In our non-essential beliefs, we have liberty, we have freedom. We need to honor that in one another as we have differences of opinion.

But, in our essential beliefs that we are talking about in this series, we’re unified, we’re together. We teach this in our Starting Point class. The Creed clarifies these beliefs. If you’ve ever done a mission’s statement at your work, it can become laborious... I’ve been in these. I’m in one right now where we can spend an hour or two talking about one word. When we were doing this as a church: “Inspiring the family to become fully devoted of Christ,” we didn’t pop up with that in like an hour or two; that took like days because we would spend forever on the word *inspiring* or *declaring* or *encouraging*. So, if you’ve ever been a part of something like this, the reason you do that as a company is so that you remove all that could be vague. You try to remove the interpretation of it.

The Creed clarifies. It summarizes, but it also clarifies. It says, “This is what we believe. We believe in the virgin birth. And we always will.” We’re not moving away from that. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus, as we’ll look at next week. The reason this is so important is if you get to a place... This is why the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed came up with very clear, concise statements on how Jesus is God, period. Because if he’s not, then you get into this he’s not perfect, he couldn’t die for your sins, he didn’t rise from the dead, and if he hasn’t been risen from the dead, the scripture says we’re still dead in our sins and our faith is useless. This is why what we believe matters.

We’re still in the introduction. Let’s move on from the introduction to get to the heart of what we’re looking at today. **The Creed reminds us of our beliefs**. So, it summarizes, it clarifies, but it also brings us back to.

When you read in 1 Corinthians 11 the fact that the church was divided... When they came together for the Lord's Supper, there was great division among them. The Apostle Paul said, "This is why you take the Lord's Supper. You take the Lord's Supper so that you come back together and you're reminded of why you're even together in the first place."

This is what brings us to Colossians 2. Here's what Paul says. **6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord... Our Lord, as Lord ...continue to live your lives in him...** Move forward in the faith that was established in you by Jesus. Come back to that, stay in that, live out the gospel in your life. Don't just look to the gospel as something that saves you. Don't just look to the gospel as something that keeps you out of hell, but look to the gospel as something that does all of that and is the way you live. This is what he's saying. Be reminded in this.

7 ...continue to live your lives in him, rooted... I love this word rooted. I remember I used to work for a school district and they would have us remove old, dead bushes. If you've ever tried remove an established bush of ten or fifteen years, you realize you've got to back a truck up to it, wrap a chain around the base of it, and you've got to rip that thing out. We had this old truck, but it had power. It was an F650 from the 60s. I can remember this little boxwood bush. We wrapped a chain around it. My friend, Kevin, was driving... I told him when to go. The fact that thing stopped an F650. Why? Because it was rooted. It had deep roots and couldn't be moved. Then I said, "Punch it!" Punch it meant we're pulling up the PVC septic pipes, we're pulling up the irrigation system... How many of you have ever pulled up a bush and were shocked at things that it's wrapped around? It takes root.

This is your faith and it's why The Creed is so important. "You're not going to shake me on this one. I'm not going to move off this. I'm rooted..." He uses plant and agriculture here, but then moves into the building. So, we want to include our contractors too.

...and built up in him... Build your life off of what you've learned and what you first learned about Jesus. **...strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.** If you're having a grateful problem life, if you're having a pity party this morning, the greatest antidote to a pity party is go back to what you first believed, back to when you were first saved and the gratefulness you had when you were first saved, and be reminded. Being reminded of what Jesus did for you and where Jesus has brought you is the greatest way to find thankfulness in your life.

8 See to it... This is why he's saying it because there are always those creeping into the church and creeping into culture that are going to want to move you off of what you believe. **...that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world...** So, most scholars believe here we're speaking of just the basic rules of how the world operates. Again, this is constantly changing. The world is always coming to you, follower of Jesus Christ, to tell you what you believe and what you shouldn't believe anymore. "We're making progress in this area. Don't believe that anymore, go with the world." The world is changing; your faith must not. You must be rooted in what you believe. **...rather than on Christ.**

I personally believe we need a council on marriage and family established because as we move away from what God intended for marriage and family, we need to get back to stating this is what he gave us and what we believe and we're not moving off of this. But the world is going to constantly be pulling

you away. If I can just say this... We've said it a hundred times at this church. Follower of Jesus, don't be so open minded that your brain falls out. Be okay with standing before anyone, follower of Christ or not, and declaring what you believe about Jesus.

"I believe in Jesus Christ, His son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man. He died for my sins, he rose again. I believe in the church gathering together and being united together, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the body, and in the life everlasting." I believe this. It's at the core of who I am. I'm rooted in this; I'm building my life off of this. As the world keeps drifting away, you're going to be called names for what you believe. You're going to be told you're wrong for what you believe. You're going to be told you're close-minded and you need to become more progressive. That's the opposite of what the scripture teaches us. The scripture teaches us to be rooted and built up in this, stay true in this because the world is changing.

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form... He is God. Jesus is God. 10 ...and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. Some cults, other world religions say one day you won't just be like God; you'll be God. Not true. You're brought into this because of what Jesus did for you and when you place faith alone in Christ alone, you're brought fully into it. ***He is the head over every power and authority.*** We looked at this last week in the sovereignty of God.

In 1 John 4, we read this: ***1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...Test them, understand them. ...because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God... If you don't know where someone is coming from, this is how you test it. ...Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God... If they deny this, walk away. 3 ...but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.***

This weekend, I was in Portland on Friday night for Date Night Comedy and the pastor there has been there 20 years. I need to spend more time around him because he was very inspiring. There is a dark cloud over the City of Portland in my opinion when I'm there. I feel it in other cities in the country I go to. There's just a, if I can say it, demonic presence. I can't explain it fully. I'm just saying the pastor verified this.

The pastor told me the story of how recently he befriended and became like a workout partner with a man who gave his life to Satan, attended a satanic church. He wore like fifty necklaces around his neck with animal artifacts in them from his worship services. This pastor became friends with him and they spent a long time together.

He said that one day his friend came up to him and said, "Hey, when are you going to do that Jesus thing on me.?"

My new pastor friend said, "I don't know what you mean."

The guy goes, "No, that Jesus things. I know you're doing this for a purpose; there's a Jesus motive in this somewhere."

The pastor said, "Do you want me to pray for you?"

He goes, "Sure."

The pastor said, "Ted, as I started praying, this guy was knocked back ten feet and to the ground. And all I can tell you is when he stood up, he was a born-again believer in Christ Jesus." When you listen to this pastor talk, he was probably in the military too. I didn't ask him. He's just really strong and puts out that vibe like, to paraphrase Ghostbusters, "I ain't afraid of no demon." He just stood there.

So, they kept building this friendship and he's discipling him, but after a couple of weeks, the pastor said, "Can we talk about these necklaces?"

The guy said, "I've tried, but they won't let me take them off. You don't understand that every time I put one on, I made a covenant with a demon." He went into all of it.

So, the pastor gets a catalogue and he says. "I want you to pick out fifty new necklaces." The crosses and the Christian symbols... Can you imagine taking off a bone of a goat and replacing it with Philipians 4: 13? I'm sitting there thinking *The Lord is still working in mysterious ways throughout all people.*

He said he got the fifty necklaces in that the pastor purchased and they sat down together over the course of a couple of hours. The pastor prayed over each necklace and as he put it on him, he took one off. So, now he's got fifty Christian necklaces. He looks like he's at a book sellers' convention.

A few weeks later, the pastor sees him and all the necklaces are gone. I'm sure the pastor's thinking, *I spent \$500.00 on those necklaces; where did all those necklaces go.* This is what the guy said and I just love this. He said, "Every person I've done that Jesus thing to, I gave them one of these necklaces, so I've run out."

I wasn't planning on sharing this story, but I was thinking about it when we sang, "There is no power in hell, nor any who can stand before the power and the presence of the great I AM.

The pastor said, "Something is going on in our city, Ted, I can't explain it, but over the last couple of weeks, as I'm walking down the street, people who are walking in the same direction as me will just turn and look at me and start growling at me, start cussing me." He said, "It happened tonight coming in here. We're a little way from the church. We're in the car, pulling up, and this guy turns and looks at me and just starts screaming at my car."

There is no power in hell, nor any who can stand before the power and the presence of the great I AM. It is not you, but it is the power of God in your life. You're brought into the fullness of God. This is why what we believe matters so much.

So, we said we were not going to let you leave here every week without giving you how it plays out in your life. This is what you do with declaring "I believe in God the Father Almighty Creator of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary."

Sin – Here's why this is important. When we're talking about your sin, *He will save his people from their sins*. Mathew 1: 21 We believe that **Jesus delivers you and me from the penalty, power, and presence of sin**. If you're looking for the big theological terms, this is justification, sanctification, and, one day, glorification. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Jesus saves you from the penalty of death. You're being freed, sanctified. You're being freed from the very power of sin and, one day, you'll be free forever from the presence of sin.

Decisions – How does this effect your decisions? How many of you remember years ago it became another big piece of jewelry – WWJD. What would Jesus do? We were hypothesizing in this situation, what would Jesus do? But, I think there are two better bracelets out there.

Here's one: WDJS – What did Jesus say? Let's go with that. I know it's not as quick to say as WWJD, but what did Jesus say? May the words of Christ be in you that when you come face to face with a demon, you're able to declare there is no power in hell, nor any who can stand. You're not like those kids behind the barricades, shaking. You're on solid ground because you know what you believe. I think there's even another one. HDJL – How did Jesus live? I want to take on not only his words, but also his life. I want my behavior and my words to flow out of my heart because my heart belongs to God.

Affliction – Let's move on to affliction. You're going through a very difficult time right now. How does this part of The Creed fit or change what you believe about the trials and the difficulties that you're going through? This whole idea of the humanity and deity of Jesus.

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore... Remember that *therefore* is very important in the scripture. It means we are going to move from deep theological truth to very clear application. What do you do with the fact that we have a high priest who understands what we're going through? *...let us draw near with confidence...* with boldness, with the authority from heaven. *...to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* Hebrews 4: 14-16

Death – One that has been on my heart throughout the summer and, again, as I approach another service on Wednesday night for someone who lost a family member, I think about death. How does this change the way we think about death? ***16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*** And all God's people said... Amen.

Father, it is in the name of Jesus that we thank you. I believe and I declare this for the believers in this room. We believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus the Son of God died for my sins. I have placed faith alone in Christ alone and today, I am grateful. I want that thankfulness to live in me at all times, so it affects how I make decisions, so that it changes the way I approach death, so that when I go through a difficult trial, I understand there is one who understands and I can approach him immediately with this. I want to know what Jesus said and how he lived, so that can be my life.

Right before we say amen as a church family, if you're never professed faith in Jesus Christ, and today is the day of your salvation, I pray that the Holy Spirit, as he has been calling you by name, that you will just believe in your heart that Jesus has been raised from the dead and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and the scripture says with that belief, you are saved.

I'm going to give you a moment with complete silence from this stage before I say "In Jesus' name, the authority in the name of Jesus, the power of the blood of Jesus, amen." Before I say that and ask everyone to join in with that, I'm going to give you a moment to received Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Father, just to give it a little more time... For those who now are so into the world that they've bought in 100% to the philosophy and world system, I pray that today they repent of that, they turn from that, they're no longer just moving along with the world, but they are running to the foot of the cross and they are placing faith alone in Christ alone. I pray that would be their decision today.

It's in the authority of the name of Jesus and through the power of the blood of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.