

# KNOW

## Sermon 1: God



### Introduction

10 minutes

The ancient **creeds developed in the first few hundred years of the Church** that remind us of the faith that we share with Christians all over the world and all through the centuries. From the earliest days of the church, Christians have boiled down the crucial understanding of Christian faith into one statement.

### Two Creeds Most Often Discussed

- **Apostle's Creed:** Is earlier and shorter and just kind of organically developed as early Christians used and adapted it.
- **Nicene Creed:** Is longer – Because it was written by pastors who just had to get everything right!

The Nicene creed was written 325 AD, it is the one statement of belief that has unified the church across the centuries.

### Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians may not be able to agree on

- How to do Communion
- Whether their ministers should marry
- What a worship service should look like
- Which days to eat fish

But they **all three can agree** on the **Nicene Creed**. It is a point of unity in a very diverse body of Christ.

1700 Years ago, our forefathers decided we should have a creed that would help us **solidify your beliefs**.

## A Lot Of People May Be Able To:

- State their beliefs
- State the Creed

But they really don't **know** what they believe or why.

Let me make this clear from the very beginning...

The Nicene Creed is not scripture, nor should it be held as high regard as we hold or view

### The words of the Nicene Creed



- We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
- Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
- On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
- We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.
- We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Most Christians agree with the Nicene Creed, but we in the Assemblies of God have our distinctives. We take the first stanza of the Nicene Creed and we reveal our first two Fundamental Truths.

### Fundamental Truth #1:

Scripture is inspired. The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testament, are verbally inspired by God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct.

### Fundamental Truth #2:

The one true God. The one true God has revealed himself as the eternally self-existent "I Am," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let's start digging with the first stanza of the creed.

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*

The creed's most radical and important profession comes right at the beginning: "We believe in one God." This is the root out of which all the rest grows. Without this statement, nothing more can be said.

This is the starting point. "We believe in one God." In saying these words, we are making a statement that says as much about us as it does about God. We declare that God exists—and distinguish ourselves from agnostics and atheists.

### We Say That...



- **God is one** – and connect ourselves to the biblical story of Israel.
- **God is Father** – and define our **connection** to him in **intimate** relationship.
- **God is Almighty** – and ask him to **use his power for our good**.
- **God is the maker of heaven and earth** – and declare that **God can be known and experienced**.

Let's break this first stanza of the creed down and see just what the Nicene Creed and the Bible are saying when we confess "We believe in one God."

## 1. God is Creator (Hebrews 11:13)

- Why do I get more influence and authority in my children's lives than you do? Because I made them.
- God has authority over the world because he created it.

**At the same time**, we can say that we can know the Creator by looking at his creation.

In this sense, **everything that exists** is capable of revealing something of God to us simply because it exists.

- A muscle and a mountain are equally fragile and equally dependent upon God for their existence. So, they are a miracle.
- We can look at them with awe and wonder and think about the God who created them.

### Creation

- Truly is magical because it reveals the wondrous mystery at the heart of everything that is.
- Is an article of faith. But that doesn't mean I don't think it's logical or reasonable.

The Bible tells us that the designs of creation are meant to point us to the Creator. This may be part of the problem with our spirituality in the modern world. I think 21st-century Christians living in the Western world have overlooked and underappreciated creation.

If we don't appreciate the out-of-doors, then maybe we don't appreciate the Creator. Paul understood this (**Romans 1:20**).

How do you know that God exists? (**Job 37:16**)

- Look around
- Take a hike
- Wonder at the marvel of nature

If there is any passage in Scripture that is **understated**, it has to be Genesis 1:1. It has such infinite implications, yet it is stated in such simplistic terms. It says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth..."

Think about the implications:

- If God can **create the universe out of nothing**—**imagine what he can do with your life**.
- If he can speak the universe into existence, then is there anything he can't do?

## 2. God is Revealer

It is because God—the one, all-powerful Father—is the **source of all things** that God can also be the revealer, Savior, sanctifier, and judge of all things.

## 3. God is Triune

What do **Christians mean** when they say "**God**"?

- We Christians believe that **God is one**.
- This is touching on the issue of the Trinity—that God can be three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and still be one essence.

When the Nicene Creed says we believe that God is one, it is pointing back to the earliest creedal statement among God's people, the Jews.

- The statement was called the **Shema Israel**—and observant Jews still recite it today (**Deuteronomy 6:4**).
- This was a statement that set Israel apart and defined what it meant for them to be Jews.

In a world where everybody around them worshipped multiple gods—

- The god of war
- The god of harvest
- The god of fertility

The Jewish people said, "No, we will be identified by our belief in one God." It was a statement of their unique identity and a gateway to their community. It is a code for saying, "What we believe about God starts with the Hebrew Scriptures—the Old Testament."

- The God that it talks about
- The God that the Jews worship, Yahweh
- **The God of Moses and Abraham and David—that God.**

## 4. God is Father

Calling God our Father is a metaphor to help us understand the person of God.

The Old Testament uses the term "Father," but only rarely.

- One of the reasons that the Old Testament avoided the term "God as Father" is because other polytheistic or fertility religions of the day used the term with sexual overtones.
- The Old Testament generally steers clear of this term but does use it about **15** or **16** times.

The New Testament uses the term "Father" **135 times**, and **65** of those times are used by Jesus.

Why is this an especially important concept for Christians?

Jesus made it clear that because:

- Of what he was going to accomplish on the cross and
- Of the gift of the Holy Spirit—and we'll talk about both of those things in the coming weeks
- Of that, we get **adopted** into the family of God and Jesus becomes our brother, and so God becomes our Father.

This is key because if God is a Father, then that means that **God is not distant from us. God the Father** is involved in a very personal and intimate way with our lives. This was the Old Testament view of God as well (**Hosea 11:1, 2–3**).

A Father is:

- Relational
- Nurturing
- Involved

Now, as I say that, I realize that I am speaking to some of you today who—when I say "Father":

- Those are not the images that come to your mind.
- Your experience with "father" doesn't help you with putting together a good mental picture of what God is like.

But we have to remember that it is God who defines the role of fatherhood, not the other way around.

I am called a father because God first calls himself the Father, and hopefully, my kids will grow to know more about God through what they see in me. But however I succeed or fail as a father, **the ultimate picture is painted by God's interaction with his people (Ephesians 3:14–15).**

**The standard is not the man who fathered you, but the God who is Father to us all.** That's what it's supposed to look like.

## Conclusion

**God is Creator** – he still creates things visible and invisible.

**God is One** – he's not lowercase "god" among a bunch of other lowercase gods. He is unique like no other.

**God is Father** – he is not distant and uncaring, but intimate and personal in his dealings with us.

It all starts with God—the ultimate invisible reality. You can't see him—the Bible says that no man has ever seen God, but many have known him.

And this invisible God—the one God of all the world—wants to have a personal, intimate, fatherly relationship with you. He wants to use his unlimited power to bless your life and draw you closer to him. He wants to use his creation power—and it would be a mistake to think that creation is something that God did once, millions of years ago, and then laid down for a nap. No, God is still in the creation business.

Everyday God is creating. And he wants to use that creation power to create something new in your life—in my life.

God desires to create:

- A new heart in you
- Something new in your marriage and in your relationships
- A new sense of purpose and belonging

But it all starts with belief...

*We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*