

# KNOW

## Sermon 2: Son



### Introduction

10 minutes

The ancient **creeds developed in the first few hundred years of the Church** remind us of the faith that we share with Christians all over the world and throughout the centuries. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have summarized the crucial understandings of the Christian faith into unified statements.

The Nicene Creed, written in **325 AD**, is **one such 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.

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

The Nicene Creed is not Scripture, nor should it be held in as high regard as we hold or view Scripture. However, Scripture supports every word of the Nicene Creed.

The creed **contains** the **key spiritual truths** of the Bible condensed into a manageable format, **but** it has to be **unpacked** to be fully useful.

The second stanza of the Nicene Creed is about Jesus in a **chronological order** of descent to ascent. You can picture it in your mind as a series of steps going down and then going back up again.

The first **descending sequence** is often called the **humbling of God** – or the lowering of God.

**Step 1:** His **pre-existence** – Jesus is the eternal God, ruling from before creation.

**Step 2:** Jesus comes “**down from heaven.**”

**Step 3:** He is **conceived** by the Holy Spirit.

**Step 4:** He is **born of a virgin.**

**Step 5:** He **suffers** under the powers that be in the world.

**Step 6:** He was **crucified.**

**Step 7:** He **died.**

**Step 8:** He was **buried** in the ground.

**Step 9:** He **descended** into the depths.

That’s a long way to go, from heaven to the grave.

The creed continues with the **exaltation of God.** The order is reversed, and he begins to climb back up the stairs.

**Step 1:** From the depths he is **resurrected** back to life.

**Step 2:** He **ascends** back into heaven.

**Step 3:** He is **seated at the right hand** of the Father – a place of honor.

**Step 4:** He **will come again** in glory.

**Step 5:** He will **judge** the progress of the world he has created.

**Step 6:** We will **rule forever** with Him in the new heaven and the new earth that he will re-create.

From the heights of creation, to the depths of decay, right back up to the heights of creation.

It’s a pretty cool pattern:

- He came
- He lived
- He died
- He rose

Most Christians agree with the Nicene Creed, but we in the Assemblies of God have our distinctives. We take the second stanza of the Nicene Creed and reveal our Fundamental Truths 3–6.

### **Fundamental Truth #3:**

#### ***The deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.***

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles, his substitutionary work on the cross, his bodily resurrection from the dead, and his exaltation to the right hand of God.

### **Fundamental Truth #4:**

#### ***The fall of man.***

Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." However, man, by voluntary transgression, fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God.

### **Fundamental Truth #5:**

**The salvation of man.** Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **Conditions to salvation.** Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life. **The evidence of salvation.** The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit. The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness.

### **Fundamental Truth #6:**

#### ***The ordinances of the Church.***

##### **Baptism in water**

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded by the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

##### **Holy Communion**

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements—bread and the fruit of the vine—is the symbol expressing our sharing in the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, a memorial of His suffering and death, and a prophecy of His second coming, and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

## **1. Why Jesus Did What He Did**

I find it really interesting that before the authors of the Creed get into what Jesus did, **they feel the need to explain why He did it.**

We...

- Always want to know why.
- Need motive.

Let's review part 2 of the second stanza of the Creed:

*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.*

The Son of God—God Himself—became human and suffered and died as humans do. **For the sake of humans, He lowered Himself to enter into our history.**

There is no logical reason to believe it except that God Himself calls on us to believe by faith that this is exactly what He did. He made this decision to sacrifice His only Son—not because He needed it in any way—but **“for us and for our salvation.”** And He tells us that it's better than logic—it's love (John 3:16).

We are valuable and loved by God (1 John 4:8–10).

## 2. Incarnation (Deity)

One of the **great paradoxes of the faith**: Jesus was **fully** God and **fully** man at the same time—100% God and 100% human. This is not logical.

**Mary** grounds Jesus in humanity.

- Jesus was a real baby born to a real family in a real place at a real time in history.
- But not just an ordinary baby.
- Because along with that human DNA, He was also marked by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- It was a natural birth but certainly a supernatural conception.
- There is no doubt that ancient Christian writers understood the New Testament to teach that the conception of Jesus was a miraculous intervention by the Holy Spirit that **bypassed** normal sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.

The **incarnation is scandal enough**: that the Lord of all universes should enter a single time and space in the form of a baby born to impoverished parents. But now you want to tell me that this incarnate God should not only experience death, but the most shameful form of violent death as an executed criminal! (John 10:11–18)

We all have to choose either to

- Reject this message of salvation,
- Embrace the way of the world that makes sense and say “No” to Jesus, or
- Accept His message.

### 3. Salvation (Atonement)

We need a good grip on what this salvation language is all about. Because of a one-sided presentation of what it means to be saved, **people today tend to think of salvation as just a “death benefit” policy that kicks in only when they kick over.**

When the first Christians spoke of salvation in their earliest writings—just 20–30 years after the death of Jesus—they did not speak of it as a theory or an ideal. They talked about an actual human experience that was not just for the future **but something real now.**

a. They were **“being saved.”** (1 Corinthians 1:18)

The New Testament often used two words to describe this salvation: **“freedom”** and **“boldness”** (2 Corinthians 3:12, 17).

Read the words of the New Testament, and you don’t get a picture of a timid people waiting to cash in their ticket to heaven.

- Their salvation had set them free—**maybe not literally from the authorities of the world** (some of these free Christians were still legal slaves in the Roman system)—but they were free from something much greater.
- The **“witness”** of the earliest Christians was not primarily through their preaching, but through the new-found quality of their lives.
- Their strong sense of salvation as a participation in God’s life **depended on** a strong sense of liberation and power—not as something hoped for in the future, **but happening already in their present-day lives.**

b. Salvation makes a difference in the **here and now.**

It’s walking out of the prison door into the light of freedom—free and clear. What did Jesus do?

The writers of Scripture are clear: death is the problem, and Jesus is the solution (**Romans 7:24–25; John 11:25–26; 1 Peter 1:3**).

**Without the resurrection, Christianity is meaningless.** The resurrection of Christ is not the end of the battle, but it is the sign that the battle is well in hand. The triumph of the resurrection gives us hope that the final victory is on the way—hope that the war will soon be over.

### 4. Identification (Ordinances)

The Assemblies of God has identified and recognized two necessary and indispensable ordinances (observances, rites, ceremonies) to help a believer connect with the Deity: the fall and salvation of man.

- Baptism in water
- Holy Communion

Just as circumcision was a sign and seal of physical birth into the Jewish nation, baptism is a sign and seal of a new birth (born again). Water baptism always has the prerequisite of repentance and faith.

## Water Baptism

- Represents more than physical washing, but being clean and in good standing before God, and therefore regenerate (**Romans 6**).
- Water baptism is a sign of the remission of sins (**Luke 3:3; Mark 1:4; Acts 13:25; 19:4**).

## The Importance of Being Baptized in Water

- We follow the example and command set by Jesus (**Matthew 28:19–20**).
- It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Colossians 2:12**).
- It illustrates and demonstrates my new life as a Christian (**2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4**).

Remember baptism doesn't save you (**Ephesians 2:8–9**)

## Holy Communion

What does it mean when we participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion?

- Communion is a commemoration (remembrance):
  - When we partake of communion, we remember Jesus and the facts surrounding his death, burial, and resurrection.
- Communion is just that—communion:
  - When we partake of communion, we invite Jesus to pour into us his dynamic, life-changing, Spirit-energizing power. We recognize it is Jesus who anoints our gifts and talents (**1 Corinthians 10:16**). The word participation comes from the Greek word *koinonia*, which implies intimacy.
- Communion is consecration:
  - When we partake of communion, we are fully consecrating ourselves (self-denial, surrender, turning over the reins of leadership) to the lordship of Jesus.
- Communion is commitment:
  - When we partake of communion, we are renewing our lives in total commitment to the cause and purpose of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 7:21–25**).

## Conclusion

The war of good versus evil is still ongoing, and there's still work to do. But we have a hope to hold on to—for Jesus is coming back.

Christ:

- Is resurrected in power
- Our ally is coming to rescue us

At an unexpected moment in history, a trumpet will sound, and:

- Jesus will return with a mighty army to overthrow the evil and injustice of this present age.
- Jesus will join our limited efforts and carry us to victory.
- Justice will roll down like a mighty flood, and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God—and his kingdom will have no end.

The message of the Bible, the creed, and our fundamental truths is a message of hope:

- Jesus is resurrected
- Jesus ascends to heaven
- The battle continues
- But Jesus is coming again