

## The Apostles' Creed (Part 13) - Amen

Matt Chandler – November 21, 2015

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[Video]

**Male:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth...

**Female:** ...and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord...

**Male:** ...who was conceived by the Holy Spirit born of the Virgin Mary...

**Male:** ...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

**Male:** He descended to hell.

**Female:** The third day he rose again from the dead.

**Male:** He ascended to heaven...

**Female:** ...and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty...

**Female:** ...from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

**Male:** I believe in the Holy Spirit...

**Female:** ...the Holy Catholic church...

**Male:** ...the communion of saints...

**Male:** ...the forgiveness of sins...

**Male:** ...the resurrection of the body...

**Male:** ...and the life everlasting.

**Male:** Amen.

[End of video]

How are we doing? Are you doing all right? It's good to see you, especially if you are a first through fifth grader. We're glad you are in with us. A couple of times a year we do this. It's called *Family Worship Weekend*. We just kind of shut down Kids Village and bring all the kids in. Really, this is who we are as the people of God in this place, so our first through fifth graders aren't some sort of "other than" but they really do make up our lives, both in their highs and their lows, so we're glad you are with us.

I think one of the dangers in Family Worship Weekend is, as parents (or we'll say grownups) in here we have a tendency because it's a shortened time together and it will be a bit different in how we operate, we begin to think this is for the kids. In reality, the Word of God bears its weight on all ages always, so what we're doing today isn't really for the first through fifth graders; they're just participating with us, and we are aware they are with us, but it's the same Jesus, the same Word of God, and the same truths we want to embrace and rejoice in.

If you're a first through fifth grader, I love that you're here. I think you have much to teach us. You might have picked up on this (maybe you haven't). You, especially if you're in first, second, third, or fourth even... In fourth it starts to change, but really early on you walk in a kind of freedom that escapes those of us who are older because you simply don't care.

What I mean by that is you'll rejoice and play and be glad in a way that would be embarrassing to those of us who are older, not because it *is* embarrassing but because we have grown crusty. Are you tracking? What we can learn from you is we can look at and marvel at and rejoice in the freedom God has given his children in watching the freedom that you walk in as little boys and little girls in some sense.

In fact, in a very real sense, the God of the Bible would have us act in some ways more like you while having us woo you to act more like us. We need one another. What we see happening in the Bible is that what God wants is a real integration of our lives. Let me try to explain *integration* because I know I just probably lost quite a few of you.

God has given us a mind, so he wants us to know in our minds and he wants us to have understanding in our minds, with our brains, and that understanding in our minds makes its way into our hearts and becomes belief. Now the mind understands, the heart believes, and that moves us toward action and integrates us. Our bodies join in that. We walk in obedience to that.

Sometimes it works differently. Our hearts believe. Then our minds seek to understand or our body helps. We're really whole people, which is why the Word of God, the Bible, is on repeat going to engage every part of us. There is something God is doing when he commands us to do things with our bodies when it comes to worshiping him. It's about this integration God is after. It's about us being whole people.

We're going to practice this today. Kids, I'm going to need your help because you do have a kind of freedom some of us don't have. In fact, if you're really quiet, you can already hear crustiness bristling up, but the God of the Bible loves play. He loves laughter. He is not crusty in heaven going, "Be more serious!" He really does love play. He loves delight. He loves joy. He is the author of such things. We're going to practice a little integration together, so whether you're in Plano or Fort Worth or Dallas, why don't we all stand together as we practice some of this integration?

Psalm, chapter 47, verse 1, says, "**Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!**" We already shouted to God with loud songs of joy earlier (quasi-loud songs of joy). Some of us don't want to give up our Baptist roots too easily, so what we'll do here is we'll practice clapping our hands. We're going to give Jesus applause.

Kids, here's where I need you. I need you because I believe you have a type of freedom we should desire and should be walking in. Yet, the crustiness is in our way, so you can help us out this morning. On the count of three, we're just going to give Jesus a round of applause. One, two, three. That's not bad! Great job!

Psalm 98, verse 4, says, "**Make a joyful noise...**" The Hebrew word is *shout*. "**Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!**" Again, a mind

informed, a heart enflamed, and a body moved to respond. Kids, you never get this, so I'm going to give you something you rarely ever get. I'm going to give you permission to scream at the top of your lungs indoors. Everybody will give you that outside. "Go outside and scream." Tell me I don't get whipped at the house for that.

I'm saying in the house of the Lord the Bible says, "Shout!" Shouting is like, "Go!" Blow a vocal chord. Shout. On the count of three, we're going to shout, "Jesus!" Ready? One, two, three. All right. I like that. Even some of that pitch... Somebody might have died there. I know some of you who know your Bible are like, "Don't do it, Chandler. Don't do it," but we're doing it.

Psalms 149, verse 3: "**Let them praise his name with dancing...**" Now before you panic, nobody is about whip a nae nae in here or nobody is going to hit the quan. That's not what I'm saying, but because I'm looking across the landscape and I am anxious for you, I thought what we could do is, on the count of three, we'll just jump up and down a couple of times. We'll just count that.

Kids, if you like... This will be fun. If you want and you're a first through fifth grader, you can go ahead and stand up on your chair. If you're back here in Flower Mound up on those bleacher seats, watch your kid on that. We don't want anyone to blow an ACL this morning. Why don't you go ahead and get ready? On the count of three, we're just going to dance, and we're going to try to put it all together without hurting ourselves. Then we'll talk about one more aspect of what it means to gather in the name of Jesus Christ.

On the count of three, give me your two or three jumps. Listen, crusty folk, this is okay. This is a verse in the Bible. If you have your Bible with you, you can open it. It's in your Bible. Even if you have the King James, this will be in the King James. "Let us praise his name with danciness." It will be in there. On the count of three, let's give it a go. One, two, three. What do you have? All right! We're like Bapti-costal in here. I don't even know what to do with it! Praise God! Why don't you have a seat?

I know what I just did, and here's what I mean by that. Parents, on the way in here, here's what you did. "You will sit there. You will be quiet. You will pay attention. You will not get up and go to the bathroom." Then I get them all amped up. You're like, "Thanks a lot. I finally had everything like I wanted it, and you ruined it."

Here's the last thing to consider as we enter into what will be about 20 minutes of us considering some really significant things about the God of the Bible. In Psalm 46, verse 10, it says, "**Be still, and know that I am God.**" The Lord loves play, and he loves rejoicing, and he loves dancing and shouting and singing and even maybe looks at our squirminess in delight.

There comes a time... There come these spaces where to be quiet and to pay attention and to consider what's being said about God grows our understanding and enflames our hearts even more so we might rejoice and be glad at louder volumes and with more energy. The God who loves play has designed it that by understanding him more deeply and experiencing him more fully we are able to rejoice in him with greater energy and louder voices and more delight.

For the next 18 minutes or so, we're going to work on being still and knowing that he is God. We're going to quiet our hearts and consider the things of God. Then we'll end our time together with some more rejoicing. That's the plan. For the last 13 weeks (this is week 13), we have covered the Apostles' Creed. Whether you're a first- through a fifth-grader or an adult, we have covered the Apostles' Creed.

If you didn't know, parents, while we were taking phrase by phrase and looking at a biblical theology of the phrases in the Apostles' Creed, so were your first through fifth graders in Kids Village. The only variance on the creed that was made at all was where we said *descended into hell*; they said *descended into death*. Adults are a little bit better at linguistic nuance than a first grader would be, so it's easier for them to comprehend that he actually died than it is this idea that he descended into hell. That's the only nuance we made for them.

If you want to go back and talk through these things or have conversations with your first through fifth grader, they learned the same things you have learned over the course of the last 12 weeks. They, as well as us, have read the creed together, and we have said throughout the whole thing that what we're doing when we read the creed is we're joining back on thousands of years of Christian history.

We're joining not just our parents, not just our parents' parents, and not just our parents' parents' parents, but thousands of years back, there were men and women who faithfully loved and made much of Jesus and affirmed (said "Yes" to) the very things we're saying "Yes" to this morning. When we read the creed together, we're joining in with that history.

We say, "This isn't just about the here and now. We're a part of something bigger. It's global. It's all over the world. It's actually all over the universe, and we're a part of the people of God." We are simultaneously saying, "God knows what is best." When we read the creed together, we're saying, "The triune God of the Bible knows what is best." With that said, will you stand with me as we read the creed together?

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator 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 hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father Almighty from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

Go ahead and have a seat. What we want to do in our last time together around the Apostles' Creed is to consider this last word, this *amen*. In this, *amen* actually just means, "So be it. Let it be true." When you're praying at dinner and someone blesses the food, and if you're the first through fifth grader who actually gets to pray for dinner who likes to throw something random in there like the cat, also, or your buddy's finger (you just pray for these random things), and then when you say, "Amen," what you're saying is, "Yes. Let that be. I believe."

You're saying, "I believe God has heard and he will answer these things." *Amen* isn't a throwaway word. It's not like a conclusion as much as it is, "I believe what we just prayed was heard by God and he's going to respond and answer these prayers." What we just read in the Apostles' Creed, underneath it... If just Mom and Dad were in here, I would use the word *implicit*. Implicit within the creed we just read, underneath it, are some promises about God that we're banking on. Let me give you just three of the big ones.

1. *Nothing is too hard for God*. What we see in the creed as a promise to the people of God is that nothing is too hard for God. Nothing. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons yet one. Nothing is too hard for God. There is nothing in your life that is too hard for God. Nothing in your home, nothing in your past, and no struggle in your present that's too hard for God. That's a promise for the people of God. Nothing is too hard for our God. Nothing is impossible for God. He is the Creator of all things, so nothing is too hard for him.

2. *All of our sins, all of our mistakes, are forgiven freely, fully, and forever.* Any mistake we have ever made, God has released us from that mistake. He has forgiven us freely, fully, and forever.

3. *Christ will return one day and make all sad things untrue.* Christ will return, and upon his return, all that is sad becomes untrue.

We see these promises in the creed we just read. Yet, here's the reality. A lot of us really struggle to believe those promises are true about us. What I've learned is that Christians (church folk) don't usually have a problem with the abstract idea of theology, the umbrella of it. "Does God forgive sins?" They'll be able to say, "Yeah, God forgives sins. I totally believe God forgives sins. In fact, I know Jesus died for my sins on the cross and he was resurrected, so I know God has paid for all of the sin there is," until you actually start talking with them about their sin.

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about forgiveness of sins, and a buddy of mine who I have known for a long time who was here... The Spirit of God did a real beautiful thing in his life and revealed to him there were some things in his past, some things in his background, where he really doubted the promise of God that he had been fully, freely, and forever forgiven. Some things in his past, some struggles he had walked in and given himself over to that had led to some destruction in his life, he looked back on and said, "I just can't possibly believe God would forgive me."

Sometimes there's something in our past that has happened, something we've done, some wrong we have committed, and it's hard for us to believe the promise of God to forgive us freely, fully, and forever could actually be true. Some of us are in situations where scary, broken things are happening. Maybe somebody is sick, or maybe our home is a bit more volatile than we would like, or maybe we don't feel safe in our homes.

Maybe we're in relationships that are difficult, so we begin to doubt the promises of God. Maybe something really bad has happened to us, so we begin to doubt the promises of God, and although we see the promises of God, it's hard for us to believe they're true for us. If we are really honest, there are things (obstacles) that block us from being able to rejoice like we just talked about rejoicing because we can't quite believe the promises of God are true for us.

Well, the Bible has much to say about that, and here's my plan, kiddos. It's a quick and easy one: one verse, two sentences. If you have your Bibles, let's grab them. Second Corinthians, chapter 1. Two

sentences. We'll take them one sentence at a time. How do we know the promises of God are true for us? That's the question we're going to answer and how *amen* plays into that.

Second Corinthians 1:20: **"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him."** That's the first sentence. First through fifth graders, let me ask a question. I want to test the education system. Be bold. The word *all*... What does that mean? Does it mean half? Two of you have been educated. I have a lot of confidence here. Does *all* mean half? What does *all* mean? All.

Here's what's great. If we could go look at the Greek, this word *all* in Greek means all. It means all of them. What the apostle Paul is writing here to the church at Corinth and to us is, "All of the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus." Here's why this is great news. Who loves to hear, "Yes"? That brother's vocal. I like him.

How many of you say, "No, I just prefer 'No'"? "I just like to hear 'No'". In fact, if I could get more 'No's' in my life, I'd be a happier person." No. Everyone, regardless of age, we want to hear, "Yes." We love to hear, "Yes." What Paul is writing to the church at Corinth wrestling with their identity in Christ, wrestling with the promises of God, is that all the promises of God, every one of them, find their Yes in Jesus.

You don't know if the promises of God are true for you? Look to Jesus. If we go back and we just look at some of those promises that are implicit in the creed, that are underneath the creed... How do you know God can be trusted when he says all of your sins are forgiven? You look to Jesus. If you look at you, you're going to doubt it for the rest of your life, but if you look at Jesus, all of a sudden confidence can grow.

How do we know he'll make sad things untrue? We look to Jesus. We watch Jesus do it. We watch Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. We watch Jesus heal diseases. We watch Jesus drive out demons. We watch Jesus. Do you want to know how all the promises of God are true? Look at Jesus, because all the promises of God find their Yes in him.

You doubt that God is for you? You think he might be against you? Look at Jesus. The evidence, if we're going to have a Western linear thought process... You look to Jesus. Was it not Christ who came for you, not to condemn you but to save you from condemnation? That's what the Bible says. Jesus didn't come with a list of rules you have to obey.

He came and was perfection on your behalf and absorbed God's wrath toward all sin always so you could be freely, fully, and forever forgiven by God, that you'd be released from all of your wrongs (past, present, and future). Jesus is our Yes. He's our Yes. Second Corinthians 1:20. Jesus is our Yes. That's the first sentence. **"For all the promises of God find their Yes in him."**

Look at the second sentence. **"That is why it is through him..."** *Him* being Jesus. **"...that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."** We respond with, "Amen" or "I believe." As we talked about a little bit earlier on, the creed actually is going to end like it began. The creed begins with, "I believe..."

We've said there are two ways of knowing. You can know in your mind. That's called *understanding*. You can know in your heart. That's called *believing*. God calls us to both, so *amen* means, "So be it," or "I believe this is true. I'm banking on this as being true." When we pray... Again, if you pray for dinner, and you're with your family, and you thank God for the food, and you thank God he has provided, and you thank God for Mom and Dad...

Whatever you thank God for whenever we've gathered and we pray... When we pray in service for someone who is sick or we pray for a friend or a family member and we ask God to heal, we ask God to move, we ask God to work, or we ask God to save, we end our prayers with *amen*, not because God is going, "Are you done or are you not done? I'm confused here." But we say, "Amen. So be it. I believe you've heard me."

The creed is book-ended. I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth... Amen. I believe that's true. And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord... Amen. I believe that's true. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary... Amen. I believe that's true. He suffered and died for my sins. Amen. I believe that is true.

That he was resurrected and ascended. Amen. I believe that's true. I trust. I'm banking my whole life and the whole breath of my existence for eternity. I'm believing. Amen. I believe this is true that Jesus is our Yes. As we gaze upon the beauty of Christ in our souls, an *amen* should begin to develop. As the mind is informed and the heart is enflamed, the body and life should line up with a "So be it. I believe."

Here's something crazy to think about. We're like 4-1/2 weeks away from Christmas. Who is getting an Xbox One? You don't know. Put your hands down. Y'all don't know what y'all are getting for

Christmas. We're a month away from Christmas. I can't believe it's here. Next weekend when you come in, regardless of what campus you're currently sitting in, the room is going to look different. There are going to be lights and Christmas trees. There are going to be all sorts of things as we begin to get ready.

In fact, even in our foyers and lobbies right now we have the Advent Guide that is made available to you. We print one for you every year. You can download it digitally on your device. You can grab the hard copy if you're old school. Use it. What we're trying to help you do in this season is to just create and put in your hands opportunities to sit around as a family and to gaze and marvel at our Yes and to not get swept up in hundreds of really good things that I want to encourage you to do.

Like I'm for you. Go all out. Get you two Christmas trees. My wife does. Decorate that. Throw lights everywhere. Drink some wassail, whatever that is. Blare that Christmas music. Just go all in. Enjoy your family. Enjoy this season, but what this season is ultimately all about is gazing upon, thinking about, meditating upon our Yes in Christ so that our hearts might be stirred up to an *amen*, to a type of rejoicing that's informed in mind, enflamed in heart, and moves us to consider deeper realities in this season.

We're going to have a lot of fun in the weeks to come. There is going to be building anticipation as we try to find new places to hide gifts and wrap them and get them under the tree and get everything lined up to go. Kids are going to get more and more excited. There's about to be something in the air, and we need to harness that and gaze upon the beauty of Jesus.

Ultimately, to spend our time thinking of that, considering that, gazing upon the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity, God in the flesh, Jesus Christ transforms, shapes, and molds our lives in a direction it needs to be shaped and molded for rejoicing. As fun as the first part of the sermon was, all of that is informed by and enflamed by a consideration of the person and work of Jesus Christ, or it's kind of fake and sad and unsustainable.

It's a stunning thing to watch the people of God suffer and rejoice in the Bible. It's a stunning thing to watch the people of God suffer and rejoice in our midst today. It's not fake. It's not a veneer. It's not a, "I know I should act this way." It's a deep-rooted joy that is unshakable because they've gazed upon our Yes. I want to encourage you to grab the Advent Guide and to create space in your family rhythms and dynamics to consider the things of God as we move into this Advent Christmas season and consider Jesus, our Yes. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for the opportunity to come together and to sing and to shout and to clap and to laugh and to be still and know that you are God. I thank you for our first through fifth graders. I thank you for the freedom they walk in, for the delight they are to you. I pray you would make us in many ways more like them as you shape them to be more like us.

I pray that we'd be jealous of the freedom they enjoy, the energy they possess, and the glad-heartedness that seems to be intrinsic within them. Might we be jealous for that and yearn for that. Might we gaze upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, to fuel it and inform it. Help us through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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