



The Apostles' Creed

Study 2: "We Believe" (Rom. 14:1-23)

- o Only true Christians can recite the Apostles' Creed sincerely, while not all who recite the Apostles' Creed are necessarily true Christians.

I. A confession of personal faith.

1. True faith should be confessed in public.

- Rom. 10:10 is *descriptive* of those who are converted. (It is not *prescriptive* of how a person is saved.) When there is true conversion, there ought to be public confession of faith verbally & by the act of baptism (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:1-4).

: Matt. 10:33 shows that the norm for a believer is to make public confession of his faith, even under threat of persecution (cf. v 28; 1 John 4:15).

- There are exceptional situations of secret discipleship which we do not condemn or condone.

: Nicodemus, a secret believer for a time, is labelled as one who "came to Jesus by night" (John 3:1; 7:50; 19:39). Another secret disciple of Christ, Joseph of Arimathea, appeared in public with Nicodemus only after Christ's death (John 19:38).

: Those who do not make public confession of their faith will not have strong assurance of salvation (1 John 4:15).

2. We do not claim belief in Christ lightly or be accused of hypocrisy, and have a bad conscience.

- Hypocrisy is easily detected by others (Matt. 6:5, 16; 23:3-7). It brings dishonour and shame to the faith professed. It deserves the woes pronounced by the Lord on such (Matt. 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29).

- Making a *confession* of personal faith does not mean that one comes to faith by *confessing* these truths. The *fruit* of faith must not be confused with the *means* of faith.

: However, the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed constitute the *safe* minimum (not necessarily the *bare* minimum) by which a person may be brought to faith. If taught to children, God might use these truths to minister faith (Rom. 10:17).

II. The nature of true faith.

1. The living person consists of body and soul. Body is material, soul spirit. The real "you" is the soul, which manifests life in the physical world via the body.

- The living person has a personality with three basic faculties: the mind, the heart (or affection), and the will (or volition). The mind receives and processes information, the heart feels, and the will decides and motivates to action.

: In conversion, all three faculties are transformed by the Holy Spirit by the means of the truth (Rom. 6:17; 2 Tim. 1:7). The accusing conscience is laid to rest as we grow in assurance of salvation (Rom. 2:15; Heb. 10:22-23).

- : The conscience may be looked upon as the effect of the interactions between these three faculties. When converted, the accusing conscience is laid to rest as we grow in assurance of salvation (Rom. 2:15; Heb. 10:22-23; 1 John 3:18-21).
 - Augustine of Hippo considered the conscience as a separate faculty, and adds memory as the fifth. (This is followed by our friend, Maurice Roberts, today.)
 - : The Puritans generally taught or assumed that there are three basic faculties. When speaking of the conscience, however, they tend to lapse into treating it as a separate faculty.
2. The conscience must be trained to be healthy, i.e. to operate correctly based on the truth of Scripture (Acts 24:16 cf 23:1).
- A wrongly informed conscience can wreck havoc (Acts 26:9) or cause discomfort to ourselves and to others (Rom. 14:23 cf 1 Cor. 8:12).
 - : A good or pure conscience comes from doing what is right, good, and true before God (1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 1:3). Our prayers will be answered (1 John 3:22), we will be filled with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 9:1; Eph. 5:18), and used mightily by God (Col. 1:29; 1 Chron. 31:20-21).
 - : Conversely, those who adamantly reject and act against the truth will have their conscience seared (1 Tim. 4:2), i.e. hardened, rendered incapable of feeling.
- = We must hold to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, as expressed in the Apostles' Creed, with a clear conscience.

Review Questions

1. State two passages of Scripture that clearly show the necessity of confessing faith publicly.
2. Which two individuals were secret disciples of Christ for a time?
3. How will non-confession of faith affect us?
4. Give two reasons why we do not profess faith in Christ lightly.
5. How is the Apostles' Creed helpful to salvation?
6. What are the constituent parts of the living person?
7. What are the basic faculties of the human personality?
8. How may we look upon the conscience?
9. How may we have a good, or pure, conscience?
10. What will happen to those who adamantly reject or act against the truth?

Assignment/Discussion

Discuss the effects of a good conscience upon the Christian and his service to God.

Memory Passage (Rom. 14:7-9)

7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

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