

Apostle's Creed: On the third day He rose again

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Okay, so you guys first I want to pray for you, but Sam is moving from junior high into grade 10. It's a big step. I remember grade 10. We rode dinosaurs to school and that's a joke.

So yes, so it's a big step for you to go into high school. Are you nervous? Yeah, yeah. I really don't want to talk about it though. Thanks. And Emily is graduating from grade 12, which is weird to have her dad standing here as her pastor, also her dad.

Pretty weird. But that's cool that you're making that move in your life. And so let's pray for you guys. If you want to extend your hands, please go ahead and do that. Father God, thank you for Ja and thank you for Sam and thank you for Emily.

Thank you that you're at work in their lives and you have a plan for them. And they're moving into a new aspect of their lives in terms of education and learning and what you have planned for them next.

And so Father, as a church, we want to bless them as they, first of all, wrap up this year and head into the summer. I pray that you would give them a summer of refreshment and joy and just doing stuff that they want to do for a change.

[1 : 17] And Father, I pray that you'd continue to honor their work in their schooling or their career pursuits or whatever you have planned next for them.

That they would stay close to you and engage with you. And Father, as a church now, we present them with a special copy of your word. Not that these particular Bibles are somehow miraculously imbued with powers.

But Father, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, Scripture tells us. And so Father, I pray that these Bibles will mark a special day in their lives and a special milestone that they've achieved.

So Father, bless them and bless their summer again. And we pray these things in your name.

Amen. I have to put tags on because I have a really bad memory.

Miss? Young man? There you are. God bless you guys. Perfect. Thank you, guys.

[2 : 18] Now you guys can be released back into the wild. All right. Well, let's pray this morning. Father God, we bow humbly before you this morning.

We are in awe of who you are. Not just as the Almighty God, but as the creator of the universe. The creator of everything around us. And yet, Father, you are also our creator.

You are our God in the most personal way that could possibly be. Father, you care deeply for each one of us. You know us deeply. And you know where we are right now at this very moment in our lives.

Father, you see us. And it can be so easy for us to forget that in a world that doesn't see much. So help us to remember that you have your eye on us in every possible positive way that can mean.

Father, we're deeply grateful at this time of year for children. We're grateful for all the different things they've done throughout this school year.

[3 : 30] The things that they've learned. The new experiences that they've had. The new friends that they've made. The teachers that have impacted their lives. And yet, Father, we celebrate with them now as they're in the homestretch.

There may be a few exams to write. A few assignments to finish. But, Father, it's almost over. And so thank you for summer. Thank you for this new season and what it means to all of us.

Father, I pray for the way that you'll bless our families with rest and rejuvenation and relationship.

And so many other things this summer. Father, I pray for safe travels for people who are traveling to different places.

People who are staying home. Keep them safe. Help them to deepen and engage in relationships and new activities. And enjoy the weather around us. And, Father, I pray also that no matter what we're doing this summer.

Summer can be a busy time in different ways. It frees us up from some responsibilities as we head on vacations. But, Father, I pray that you would keep us close to you. That you would give us opportunities to see you in the most powerful ways this summer.

[4 : 42] As we relax and change gears. Father, I also thank you that we are family. Not just here as Braemar Baptist Church. But as believers around the world.

We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Because of what he has done for us. Because of what you are to us. And who you are to us. So, Father, I thank you for that unique, one-of-a-kind family relationship that we have through you.

Father, we also recognize that there are people who grieve right now in our church. There are people who have experienced loss and physical pain and emotional pain and hurt.

And so, Father, I pray that through your spirit they will feel encouragement. They will feel peace. They will feel healing through you, Father. And, Father, we recognize that happy and sad experiences shape us.

Challenges shape us. They're not all bad. And so, Father, I thank you for how you are at work in our lives. In the good times and the bad times. Father, we also recognize this morning that all we have and all we are comes from you.

[6 : 02] Father, many of us are well provided for. Many of us have what we need. But others do not. And so, Father, we recognize that there are needs. And that only you can provide for them.

And only you can provide for them in the best way possible. And so, Father, whether needs are spoken or unspoken, are in the bulletin or not in the bulletin.

Father, we recognize that there are needs. And only you can meet them. And so, we ask that you would do that. Father, we also thank you for needs and prayers that have been met and answered.

Because you are good. Father, this morning as we reflect specifically on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and what that means to us. Help us to be able to hear what you have for us this morning.

As I speak, these are not my words, Father, but your words. And may the message that each one is meant to hear this morning would be heard.

[7 : 02] That you would speak through me to the needs that matter most. And that this message would be heard in the way it needs to be heard. And we pray all of these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen. Well, good morning, Brighamore Baptist Church. For anyone who may not know me, my name is Kent Dixon. We've got friends visiting here that we worked with last summer at camp.

So, hi to friends. Everyone's saying, who are the new young people? None of the friends of ours. Part of our posse. So, it's my pleasure and my privilege.

It's a blessing for me to be the lead pastor here. And it's church picnic day, which is awesome. It's a beautiful day. After we got poured on all week. I looked at the forecast last night and I thought, it's a window.

Here's the window. So, I want to give you a pastoral information moment, first of all. I will be in the office on Tuesday this week. But then starting a vacation this coming Wednesday.

[8 : 03] The Dixon family road trip. So, put four adults in a Yaris and drive out to Vancouver Island. Yes, you can pray for us. Pastor Luan will be preaching the next sermon in our series on the Apostles' Creed next Sunday, June 30th.

And then to answer the question that a few people have had for me, Dr. Jerry Shepard, who's the associate professor of Old Testament at Taylor Seminary, is a good, good friend of mine.

And he's a wise and kind man. And he will be preaching at Breemar on the 7th and the 14th in a two-parter that I've asked him for. He has some amazing content that he does on covenants.

And so, he'll be talking on the 7th and the 14th about the covenants through the Old Testament, covenants in the New Testament, and of course, the covenant in Jesus Christ. So, we will be back on July 16th.

We appreciate, as I said, your prayers for safe travels, some amazing moments. We're going to be connecting with family as we head out to the coast. We need, it's probably been about, I'm not even kidding, five years since we had a proper vacation.

[9 : 20] So, I'm actually only 27 years old. It's just the lack of a vacation that makes me look as old as I do. But, yeah, no, it's been a long time, and so we're pretty excited.

So, let's begin this morning by reciting the Apostles' Creed together. And think of these words again as your personal declaration to God.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day, he rose again. There we go, sorry about that. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will 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.

[10 : 30] Amen. As we've been exploring the Apostles' Creed together over the course of this series, we've reaffirmed so many of the core beliefs of our faith so far.

So, let's take a little moment to recap. We believe in one God who created all things, including each of us. We believe in a Trinitarian God who includes three unique persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Son became human and the man, Jesus Christ, who had no human father, but was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to a virgin named Mary.

We believe that the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate sentenced the man, Jesus, to die by crucifixion and that after he died, Jesus' body was laid in a tomb.

We believe Jesus' spirit left his body and went to where those who died before him had gone. We believe that by passing into that place, Jesus changed the nature of eternal destiny for all of humanity and restored the opportunity for a healthy relationship between humanity and God.

[12 : 01] So, this morning we're continuing in our series on the Apostles' Creed with the phrase, On the third day he rose again. So, as I've said before, if it sounds in the morning like we're singing songs that somehow don't fit the time of year, this would be why.

So, singing about Christ being risen is where we are this morning. We've talked throughout our series about the Apostles' Creed being a fairly concise summary of the core of what Christians believe.

But our phrase this morning breaks it down even further than that. Christianity in a nutshell. Christ died. Christ rose.

Amen? Amen? He came back to life. Christianity stands unique among all world religions.

Only the central figure of Christianity claimed to be the literal son of God. And only the central figure of Christianity, Jesus Christ, died and came back to life.

[13 : 15] The resurrection is quite simply one of the most critical, if not the most critical, assertion of our faith. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15, 13-17, If there is no resurrection of the dead, then, hear this, not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless. And so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God.

For we have testified about God, that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him, if in fact the dead are not raised.

He did not raise him, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, follow the logic here, your faith is futile.

You are still in your sins. The Apostle Paul leaves no doubt here that resurrection, and specifically the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the essential core of our faith.

[14 : 44] Because if resurrection isn't something that God does, if God is not in the resurrection business, then not only do dead people in general stay dead, but then Jesus himself stayed dead.

The one whose resurrection supposedly broke the finality of death, for all of us, never really happened in the first place, if God doesn't raise people.

Do you see how that would be a pretty big problem for Christianity? Christianity? The hope that we hold would be nothing more than a line. This life would be it.

So as people who are sitting here this morning, professing, I'm assuming, and I know lots of you, so I know this is true, professing the nature and the reality of Jesus Christ.

But do you see how people outside the doors who don't have Jesus, this is it. When I die, that's it. I've got a limited time on my clock, and once it's over, it's just over.

[16:01] I have friends that honestly feel that way, and it's sad. But thankfully, Paul's resurrection sermon didn't end at verse 17.

Continuing again in 1 Corinthians, at verse 20, the Bible says, but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

Scripture actually records several accounts of people being raised from the dead, and I thought this was kind of fascinating as I read back through them, the accounts.

In 1 Kings 17, we read that the prophet Elijah raised the widow of Zarephath's son from the dead. In 2 Kings 4, chapter 4, pardon me, we read that the prophet Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son.

[17:14] Again in 2 Kings, we read that a man was raised, this is amazing, was raised when his body was thrown into Elisha's grave. Elisha was already dead.

And he was raised to life when his body touched Elisha's bones. Dry bones live. One of the first resurrections that Jesus himself performed was in Luke 7, when he raised the widow of Nain's son. In Luke 8, we read that Jesus also raised Jairus' daughter. And in John 11, we read that he raised his friend, Lazarus.

We also read in the book of Matthew that other resurrections occurred at the same time Jesus himself was resurrected. As the bodies of many people, it says in scripture, holy people were raised to life.

The apostle Peter raised a woman named Tabitha, whose Greek name was Dorcas, back to life.

The apostle Paul raised a young man named Eutychus back from the dead.

[18:22] But of course, the most notable resurrection in scripture was that of Jesus himself. So what does it mean to say someone rose from the dead?

Well, some people, some of us might think of it in terms of when a person dies, they're most likely lying down or they fall down. So if they were resurrected, they might physically, literally be rising again, physically standing up.

So it may be a literal or physical rising that comes to mind when we hear that expression. And many theologians suggest that as Christ essentially descended to a lower place of existence, he descended from his role, his divine role as the son of God to become born as a man.

He descended when he died in stature, in status to the realm of the dead. And then in returning to the land of the living and ultimately returning to be with God was also a state that he ascended to. As I was thinking this through, I thought at this point, I have completely lost you. Have I? I hope not. So in coming back from the dead and returning to be with the father, yes, Jesus rose in our basic way of understanding that.

[19:48] But in rising, he also returned to the rightful place he originally came from. Do you see the parallel of the meaning there? We can see that progression as descending.

The son of God came to earth, became human, subjected himself to human pain and suffering and ultimately death. To then ultimately rise, to return to, to redeem, to restore, to lift up in ways that we can only partly understand in a very limited way right now.

So while we can see, while we see God glorified himself through the resurrection of other people throughout scripture, can you also see how Jesus' own resurrection, while somewhat similar, was also amazingly and gloriously different?

What do you think it was like for Jesus' friends, his family and his followers to know that he was gone? So the entrance to a Jewish tomb would have been fairly small.

So the stone that was needed to cover the opening would have been about a foot thick and about four to six feet in diameter. But depending on the type of stone that was used, it could weigh as much as one to two tons.

[21:19] And that's 2,000 to 4,000 pounds. It's a lot. In Matthew 27 and John 19, scripture tells us that two men could move the stone into place.

But removing the stone would have been a very different challenge. Generally, that stone that sealed the tomb was set into a groove, and you can see it a bit in this picture.

It was set into a groove in front of the entrance, and it was kept from falling over by a short stone wall. And I've seen other pictures of tombs where the wall is higher, comes up higher over the stone.

And often the groove itself was not level, but slightly sloped, so that to close the tomb, the stone would be rolled in a groove down a decline and would come to rest in front of the opening.

So not only had Jesus' friends and family and followers watched as he died, many of them had literally seen his body placed in that tomb and saw the stone rolled into place.

[22 : 35] Once Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb and the tomb had been sealed, it was, in so many ways, over.

Their hope, their Messiah, was gone. I can say with some confidence this morning that each of us have had someone we deeply loved and cared for die.

We're all likely too familiar with the deep sense of grief and loss that comes when someone important to us dies. But can you even begin to imagine what it was like for anyone who believed in Jesus and all that he had said about himself?

These people had no knowledge of what was to come, my friends. Zero. They believed in what Jesus said. They believed in who he said he was.

And yet they seemed to have their hopes totally dashed that day when he was buried. For so many people who knew Jesus and followed him, he was their hope.

[23 : 56] Not just for today, but for the future. For their future. Scripture is clear that three days passed after Jesus was buried, before he came back to life.

Have you ever wondered about the significance of three days? As Christians, we read that. We read that it was three days. We learn that in Sunday school.

We say it on Easter. We memorize that. But have you ever wondered about the significance of that? Call me curious. I was wondering.

So let me share some ideas with you. Some scholars suggest that three days was the acceptable amount of time for a guest to have visited in the Hebrew culture.

So there may have been a connection there. A visitor, but only for a while. Others have suggested that medically, a human body would have entered the stages of decomposition after that amount of time had passed.

[25 : 02] for anyone who knew there would have been no doubt in anyone's mind that at that point Jesus had definitely died and was gone completely in every mortal sense.

And of course, we know the rest of the story. But as I read this next passage, close your eyes and try to imagine what it would have been like for someone who came to the tomb on one particular morning.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

In their fright, the women bowed down their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, Why do you look for the living among the dead?

[26 : 18] He is not here. He has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee, the Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified, and on the third day be raised again.

Against all odds, my friends, against any possible chance, the impossible happened. Jesus' body was gone.

And we also know that Scripture tells us Jesus appeared alive and in a physical, tangible form to many people that same day.

He ate fish. They touched his wounds. And to me, it's significant that Jesus appeared physically to many people. It may be obvious that I say that.

But we know that the Hebrew tradition was a largely spoken one. People shared knowledge and experience with others, not only during their time, but with future generations as well.

[27 : 37] Friends, the written accounts, not only of Jesus' death and burial, but also of his resurrection and ascension to return to be with his father are based on, hear me, first person, eyewitness accounts.

This is not made up. This is not something somebody wrote down and thought was a good idea. This is passed on, intentional, accurate information.

They are truth. What did Jesus' resurrection confirm to the people of that time? Jesus was as he claimed to be, the Son of God.

He had conquered death, not just for himself, but for all of humanity. Their Savior, hear this, their Savior was alive and preparing an eternal home where that amazing family of everyone who believed in Jesus.

My dad is there. My mom is there. Ola's dad is there. That amazing family of everyone who believed in Jesus, who believes in Jesus, past, present, and future.

[29 : 10] That home is where we all belong. We don't belong here. We are here, but we are only visitors. So how should that resurrection, the resurrection of Jesus, shape the way that we live?

This morning, we are not speaking of ancient history, but of present reality. The Savior we've been talking about and singing about this morning is your Savior too.

Not just mine, not just theirs in the Bible. He's yours. We serve a risen Jesus. He's not a figment of your imagination.

He is as alive today as he was on that third day so long ago. My challenge for us this morning and every morning is to not live in the then.

not living, sitting back and waiting for when Jesus returns and waiting for God's will to be done. That is not our calling.

[30 : 26] That is not our commission. We are to be people of the now. We are to live in the hope of what Jesus has done for us. Live with the conviction and glorious purpose that he has called us into.

Because the gospel, my friends, is a great, great gift. Go out and be people who share it.

Don't keep it to yourself. Be people who bask in the joy of it as we bask in the sunshine, God willing, of our picnic this afternoon.

Bask in that glory and hope of Jesus Christ and take comfort in the eternal hope that it brings to us, to our world, to all of creation.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for your son. Thank you for the sacrifice that he made, but more than that, Father, thank you that he rose again.

[31 : 38] not back then, but to live today. And Father, Jesus is just as alive today as he was on the first day when he was born in Bethlehem.

Father, he is living and breathing and he is our Lord and Savior. And so, Father, help us to engage with Jesus, to connect with Jesus, to talk to him, because he loves us and you love us.

Thank you for the cross and thank you for the empty tomb. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.