

SERMON NOTES Sunday 3rd November 2024

sunnysidechurch

Theme: **We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son....**

Passages: **Luke 4.14-21, Hebrews 1.1-4**

Some of the main themes from the sermon

Why believe?

There are different sorts of truth in the Creed: big truths and smaller, secondary ones. They all matter because they, between them summarise what the early church took as the key tenets of belief from the Bible. Well over half the Apostles Creed is about Jesus, who he was and what he did. Of course, there is disagreement about different elements of the creed within the Christian church and outside there will be people who reject every aspect of the Creed, even down to the existence of Jesus. Today I want to talk to you as fellow believers but also people who, like me, have enquiring minds and need to feel the force of the truths we believe. I want to share with you why I believe...

Three Big truths: Truths that take me by storm and change my life

- 1 'Jesus Christ, God (the Father)'s only Son...
2. He...was crucified, died and was buried
3. ..he rose again.

For me Christianity is about the authenticity of the person Jesus. Our first reading catches Jesus at the start of his 3 year ministry. I can feel the electricity as he makes his astonishing claim that he is the Messiah that Israel has been waiting for for centuries. As the Gospel continues we journey with the disciples and discover like them that Jesus is more than just the Messiah. He is so closely aligned to God that he is God. Think about Peter's statements in Luke 5.8 and 9.20. **That's big truth number 1:** Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

Big truth number 2 is that he died 'giving his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10.45), me and you included.

Big truth number 3 is that he rose from the dead. I find the evidence that this happened absolutely persuasive. And it matters! If he rose from the dead, he really was God's Son. His promises take on a solid gold authenticity, so we can believe that he really did come to give his life for us.

Secondary truths: Truths that follow on and make sense

There are other truths about Jesus in the Creed that either follow on from the three big ones or make sense in the light of them. I'm not sure how I understand

Jesus descending to the dead or what took place when Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit but I can assent to those statements because the big truths make sense of them.

Why these truths matter

The only reason for believing something is because, whether you like it or not, you are convinced that it's true. However, the truths about Jesus are uniquely life changing. They point to a God who is more involved and more loving than we could ever have imagined. They mean we should rejoice in our creed rather than just seeing it as a dull bit of liturgy. It is life and joy and hope!

Living in the light of the truth

Living in the light of the creed gives us hope and a confidence that Jesus 'is seated at the right hand of the Father' and will return to claim the world as his Father's kingdom. In the words of the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich, 'All shall be well. And all manner of thing shall be well.'

It is a faith that has given many people down the ages and even today the courage to die. It is a faith that gives us the courage to live.

Some questions for thought and discussion this week:

1. **Look at the section of the Apostles' Creed that is about Jesus. Which phrases are really important to you? Are there phrases that you feel mean less in your experience? Why might this be?**
2. **Thinking of who Jesus is, which of the following aspects of his person matter most to you today: Friend, teacher, forgiver of sins, miracle worker or something else?**
3. **'Gospel' means good news. Think about how you might talk with a friend from another world faith to explain why you believe that Jesus was 'good news'. What about an agnostic friend?**
4. **Are there any phrases in the Apostles' Creed that cause you alarm or concern?**
5. **Do creeds matter? If so, why and if not, why not?**