

The Apostle's Creed November 23, 2014

In going through the parts of the Apostle's creed we are up to the last section, which begins, **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints** and then, we will be saying today that we believe in **the forgiveness of sins.**

1 Jn 1.9: **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

By the grace of God, we can come to our Father in heaven and confess and repent and ask forgiveness. And because He is faithful to His promises and just in all His ways, we have forgiveness through the Lord Jesus, alone.

(recited during the reading of the gospel) 1 Jn 2.1 **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

We are being changed by His sanctifying power to sin less and less, but when we do sin we have an advocate, a defense, in Jesus Christ the righteous. His work on the cross paid the penalty for our sin, and His righteousness was imputed to us, making us acceptable to our just and holy Father.

Col 2.13-24: **13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**

We are made alive together with Christ by the power of His resurrection and our trespasses are forgiven. The condemnation against us was nailed to the cross, when the Lord was nailed there. He who knew no sin became sin for us, and paid for us there. When we say we believe in the forgiveness of sins, we are saying no less than that we believe in the gospel, the good news of salvation from the penalty of our sin in Jesus Christ.

Rom 3.23-26: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (we are sinners law-breakers, in need of forgiveness) 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed..

By the mercy and forbearance of God, our sins have been passed over, like the angel of death passed over the houses of the people of God whose homes were marked by the blood of the sacrificial lamb. His blood is the propitiation for our sin; He satisfied the wrath of God against our sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

And because God forgives us in Christ our Lord, so we are able to forgive others, and are commanded to do so; We are to forgive others as we have been forgiven in Christ.

This is something we should thank God for each day - that we are forgiven. We should preach the gospel to ourselves every day!

So as we say the Apostle's creed together, and then come to the communion table of the Lord, we are declaring that we believe that forgiveness is possible only in Christ Jesus our Lord, by His shed blood and broken body sacrificed for us. Let's remember the cost of this forgiveness as we partake of these signs of His covenant of grace.

And let's also partake with joy, and thank the Lord that we are able to forgive others as He has forgiven us.

Let's declare what we believe together:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker 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 into Hades. The third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there 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

Pray: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, You are worthy of all praise and thanks that we are forgiven, and can be forgiving, because of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, our advocate, our sacrificial lamb, our redeemer. Thank you for freeing us from the penalty and dominion of sin, from slavery to sin, and giving us true life and hope. Forgive us for taking this amazing and wonderful forgiveness for granted, and for not being forgiving ourselves. Enable us by Your grace to partake of this communion with joyful and thankful hearts, remembering the cost of our forgiveness, and we come as your children saved by grace through Jesus Christ, and pray in His name. Amen.