

Crucified, Dead. and Buried
Matthew 27:11-66

We believe in one God,... And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,...
 who for us and for our salvation
 came down from heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 and was made man.

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.***

Today we return to our study of the Nicene Creed. This creed came out of the first great council of bishops that were invited by the emperor Constantine in the summer of the year 325 to discuss the Christian doctrine of the person and work of Jesus Christ. A teacher name Arias had been teaching that Jesus Christ was the first creature that God created. But this council of some 300 bishops affirmed that what Arius had been teaching was a radical theological error. Jesus Christ the Son of God was not the first creature that God had created because the Son himself was co-eternal with the Father and was the agent of creation – the one through whom God created all things. In other words, the Son and the Father were equal in their divinity and creatorship, who along with the Holy Spirit, comprised the 3 persons in the one God.

You may remember that this false teaching of Arius which we call heresy, that is, it promotes a fundamental and serious error in the Christian religion, is still with us today. Groups such as the JW's still teach the same heresy – that Jesus Christ was not God in the flesh – he is less than God. But the council of Nicea, along with later councils, affirmed and declared that Jesus Christ the Son is fully God, God from God, Light from Light, very God from very God.

Last week Brother Wayne taught us from the first section of the Creed regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ – that the second person of the godhead was sent by the Father and implanted by the HS in the womb of the virgin Mary. You remember he used the illustration of our navels. Just like we have a navel, so did Jesus. He was attached to his mother while he was in her womb by the umbilical Cord and when he was born that cord was cut. So he was born just like you and I were born and his umbilical cord had to be cut, resulting in a navel, just like yours and mine. The point here is that Jesus was as fully human as you and I are.

When he was conceived in the womb of Mary he did not cease to become God. That would actually be impossible. God cannot cease to be God or if so, he would not be God.

So Jesus's deity, his manifested glory, was hidden, so to speak, by his humanity, but he was still God. For a time he laid aside some of the prerogatives of his deity. Phil. 2:7 says that he

emptied himself, by taking the form of a (E)servant, (G)being born in the likeness of men.

The Creed states it this way:

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ...

who for us and for our salvation
came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

Today we take up the next section of the creed, the section that continues with an affirmation and declaration of the identify of Jesus Christ, of his saving work, which states:

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.***

IL – Israeli museum piece in Houston

Roman historian Tacitus who lived in the 1st century stated:

“... Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reining of Tiberius.”

Also Josephus:

“At this time, there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

These two historians confirm what the Bible teaches in more detail regarding Christ's crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.

Let us look at our text today – Matthew 27, as to what it says regarding these three points in the creed:

***he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death
and was buried.***

Matt. 27:1

^(A)When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people ^(B)took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ² And they bound him and ^(C)led him away and ^(D)delivered him over to ^(E)Pilate the governor

¹¹ ^(A)Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you ^(B)the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, ^(C)“You have said so.” ¹² ^(D)But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to him, ^(E)“Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” ¹⁴ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

The Crowd Chooses Barabbas

¹⁵ ^(F)Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶ And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or ^(G)Jesus who is called Christ?” ¹⁸ For he knew that it was out ^(H)of envy that they had delivered him up. ¹⁹ Besides, while he was sitting on ^(I)the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with ^(J)that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today ^(K)in a dream.” ²⁰ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ^(L)ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. ²¹ The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²² Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” ^(M)They all said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³ And he said, “Why? ^(N)What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

²⁴ So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that ^(O)a riot was beginning, he took water and ^(P)washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of ^(Q)this man's blood; ^(R)see to it yourselves.” ²⁵ And all the people answered, ^(S)“His blood be on us and ^(T)on our children!” ²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having ^(U)scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Jesus Is Mocked

²⁷ ^(V)Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the ^(W)governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole ^(X)battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put ^(Y)a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put

it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they ^(Z)mocked him, saying, “Hail, ^(AA)King of the Jews!” ³⁰ And ^(AB)they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and ^(AC)led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion

³² ^{(AD)(AE)}As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to ^(AF)carry his cross. ³³ ^(AG)And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ ^(AH)they offered him wine to drink, mixed with ^(AI)gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, ^(AJ)they divided his garments among them by casting lots.³⁶ Then they sat down and ^(AK)kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, ^(AL)the King of the Jews.”³⁸ Then two ^(AM)robbers were crucified with him, ^(AN)one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And ^(AO)those who passed by ^(AP)derided him, ^(AQ)wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, ^(AR)“You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! ^(AS)If you are ^(AT)the Son of God, come down from the cross.” ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² ^(AU)“He saved others; ^(AV)he cannot save himself. ^(AW)He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ ^(AX)He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” ⁴⁴ ^(AY)And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus ^(AZ)cried out with a loud voice, saying, ^(BA)“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with ^(BB)sour wine, and put it on a reed and ^(BC)gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰ And Jesus ^(BD)cried out again with a loud voice and ^(BE)yielded up his spirit.
⁵¹ And behold, ^(BF)the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And ^(BG)the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of ^(BH)the saints ^(BI)who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into ^(BJ)the holy city and appeared to

many. ⁵⁴ (BK) When the centurion and those who were with him, (BL) keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, (BM) “Truly this was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵ There were also (BN) many women there, looking on (BO) from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, (BP) ministering to him, ⁵⁶ among whom were (BQ) Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and (BR) the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Jesus Is Buried

⁵⁷ (BS) When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰ and (BT) laid it in his own new tomb, (BU) which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled (BV) a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and (BW) the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of (BX) Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, “Sir, we remember how (BY) that impostor said, while he was still alive, (BZ) ‘After three days I will rise.’ ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, (CA) lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “You have (CB) a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by (CC) sealing the stone and setting a guard.

So we see from the text:

(A) ***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.***

What we’re looking at is the crucifixion, the cross of Christ:

We see the event; now what is its meaning?

What were the effects, the results of Christ’s work on the cross?

Paul said,

Gal. 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ. It is **no longer I** who **live**, but Christ who **lives** in me. And the life **I now live** in the flesh **I live** by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1 Cor. 2:22 - For I decided to know nothing **among** you except Jesus Christ and him **crucified**.

The cross is the focus point of the work of Christ on earth to bring about the salvation of his people.

Often we used the word "atonement" when we speak of Christ's work of death and resurrection to save his people.

Definition of Atonement:

C. F. Pfeiffer: This is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning "a making at one," and "points to a process of bringing those who are estranged into unity...it's use in theology is to denote the work of Christ in dealing with the problem posed by the sin of man, and in bringing sinners into right relation with God." NBD, P. 107

IBID: "It is clear that in the OT it was recognized that death was the penalty for sin (Ezek. 8:20 -²⁰ (A)The soul who sins shall die.), but that God graciously permitted the death of a sacrificial victim to substitute for the death of the sinner. So clear is the connection that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews can sum it up by saying, 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission.'" (Heb. 9:22), IBID, p. 108

What does the cross , the crucifixion teach us about God, about Christ?

The cross in NT reveals:

1. Love of God for mankind:

John 3:16 - ¹⁶ "For (A)God so loved (B)the world, (C)that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not (D)perish but have eternal life

Rom. 5:8 - ⁸ but (A)God shows his love for us in that (B)while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

"The death of Christ was no accident: it was rooted in a compelling divine necessity..."
 Mark 8:31 - ³¹ (A)And he began to teach them that (B)the Son of Man must (C)suffer many things and (D)be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and (E)after three days rise again.

2. The sacrificial aspect of Christ's death

The NT is clear that Jesus came with the specific intent of offering himself as a sacrifice for the sins of his people.

Rom. 4:25 - ²⁵ (AF) who was delivered up for our trespasses

Heb. 1:3 - (B) After making purification for sins, (C) he sat down (D) at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

1 Pet. 2:24 - ²⁴ (A) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,

1 John 2:2 - ² (A) He is the propitiation (wrath bearer) for our sins

All this is seen in the LS. "Indeed, much of the language used in the institution of the Holy Communion is sacrificial, pointing to the sacrifice to be accomplished on the cross."

1 Cor. 5:7-8 - For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival!

John 1:29 - "Behold, (A) the Lamb of God, who (B) takes away the sin (C) of the world

Sacrifices to the gods was practically a universal concept in the religions of the Mediterranean world and so the NT preachers took advantage of this to make connections to the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for sins.

3. The Substitutionary Nature of the Cross

Mk. 10:45 - ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but (A) to serve, and (B) to give his life as a ransom for (C) many.

The word "ransom" here implies the idea of substitution as well as the preposition for, which in the Greek NT is "anti" which means "*for, in place of, instead of, in behalf of, because of.*"

The teaching in this verse is that "*men should die, Christ died instead, men no longer die...*" - Pfeiffer

Heb. 9:28 - ⁸ so Christ, having been offered once (A) to bear the sins of (B) many,

Isa. 53:5-6 - (A) But he was pierced for our transgressions;
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
 (B) and with his wounds we are healed.
⁶ (C) All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned—every one—to his own way;
 (D) and the Lord has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.

The agony of Gethsemane – Christ’s shrinking from the cross seems to be because he was aware he , the sinless one, would be bearing the horrible sins of his people and suffering the Father’s wrath.

2 Cor. 5:21 - ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The church has concluded that this is how we can understand Christ’s cry from the cross:

“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
 Mat. 27:46

To sum it up simply, Christ bore the penalty of his people’s sins on the cross. Instead of you and me having to suffer in hell for all eternity future, Christ intervened and God turned his wrath, he aimed the shotgun of his wrath at his Son and kept firing until all his wrath had been expended.

And Jesus bore the wrath of his Father in our place. He was the substitutionary sacrifice for our sin. He took the punishment in himself that we deserve.

This whole concept of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ for the sins of his people is what many people find objectionable to the Christian faith. It is unjust, they say, for an innocent person to take the punishment that guilty people deserve.

It is an amazing happening. It is hard for our human minds to get a grasp on this. But it is true. It is exactly what happened. What happened on the cross when Jesus bore our sins and suffered the white hot wrath of God in our place was an event of that had cosmic and never-ending results. It resulted in our sins being judged and paid for. But it also enabled God to uphold his justice.

He did not just slap us on the wrist and then say, “you are forgiven.” No, he fully judged every single sin with the utmost punishment so that his justice was not in the slightest way compromised.

As Romans 3:26 says, ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

By punishing our sins in his Son Jesus Christ, God the Father upheld his own righteous standard because he did allow one of our sins to go unpunished. Yet because our sins have been dealt with, atoned for, removed – he can forgive us.

A mysterious but real event of cosmic proportions happened on the cross – the sinless Son of God stepped in and pushed aside from the careening 18 wheeler truck loaded with God’s wrath was about to run over us and crush us beneath its load – Jesus pushed us aside and allowed that truck to hit him with full force.

We must remember that what Jesus did on the cross in bearing the punishment for our sin could never had done that except for who it was that hung on the cross.

As the Nicene creed accurately describes who Jesus was it states that he was and is...

God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.

The One who hung on that cross, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, under the authority of the Roman government with the chief priests, and the elders of the Jewish nation cheering on - he was God from God, true God from True God, who had become incarnate by the virgin Mary and was made human.

It was a true human who hung on that cross, but he was a true human who was also fully God – the Lord Jesus Christ. It was only because he was God as well as man did he have the ability to bear the wrath of the Father against all the sins of all of his people. Do you think a mere man could to this? As R. C. Sproul said, “We are saved by God from God for God.”

Only God was mighty enough and wise enough and holy enough and determined enough to save us from our sins and take us into his eternal kingdom. And it was the God-man alone, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had the power and will and ability to go to the cross and receive into his body the wrath of God Almighty against the sins of ua humans.

And why did he do all this? Why did God take the trouble to plan and execute this whole salvation enterprise? Why did Jesus leave the comfort and security and glory of the heavenly dwelling and condescend, lower himself, to take up our humanity? God did all this for his own glory. He did it out of love and mercy. He did it so he could have a people for himself, for his own name’s sake. A people who would be his own. He would be their God and they would be his people.

This is what the cross is all about – it is the way in which God’s ancient covenant promise in the scriptures was brought about, completed, and fulfilled.

When Jesus was talking to his disciples one day he said this:

“... the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Mk. 8:31

There was no other way to redeem a people for himself. There was not an easier way; there was only this hard way. This way of incarnation, of suffering and death. This way of substitution – the stepping in and buttoning up on himself the coat drenched with all our sins and guilt and then allowing God to pour the gasoline of his fury and wrath on top of him and lighting the match so that Jesus burned, so to speak, for several hours on the cross as he suffered hell in its full venom.

On the cross Christ suffered the hell that we deserved. Why do Christians wear crosses? Why do we put them on our church buildings? It’s because the cross summarizes the self-sacrificing suffering that Jesus underwent to purchase us his people, to pay our debt to God, and secure the wiping about, the removal, the obliteration, of all our sins so that we stand before God Almighty with a clean slate. It was a filthy dirty slate, but Jesus wiped it clean with his own precious blood.

If you are a Christian today, it’s because of that bloody cross on which Jesus hung. He had never been separated from his Father’s loving embrace for all eternity, but when he took upon himself our humanity he added to himself road of suffering and death.

Christ in eternity past did not suffer; of course, he did not die, because he is God. But when he took on this human body, this full humanity – he exposed himself to the certainty of temptation, suffering and death. And he experienced all three of these very human experiences.

He didn’t have to do this. He could have just left us in our sins, in our nonchalant attitude toward him, in our lack of fear and reverence toward him, in our ignorance of his holiness and righteousness, in our disobedience to him, in our rebellion to him, in our ignoring him, in all of our idol worship of the idols of this world: power, prominence, sex, money, pleasure – he could have left us in our allegiance to the devil and the kingdoms of this world. He could have gone on and let us perish in those kinds of sins and attitudes. And he would have been completely just.

He could have sent us all to hell and been done with us. He could have wiped his hands clean of us and obliterated the universe and started another with a different plan to save a people for his name’s sake, for his glory.

But, no. God was determined; he had a plan. He sent his Son to execute that plan. The culmination of the incarnation of the second Person of the Triune God, the climax of his 33 years on earth, was the cross, the suffering, the death of the Son of God.

On that day the Jewish leadership of Israel breathed a sigh of relief and the devil and his demons danced. And the disciples of Christ went into hiding in deep despair. Their beloved leader had been publicly executed and he was buried. It was all over. Their hopes were dashed. This holy, loving, and righteous man had been humiliated and mocked and tortured and killed.

His loving compassion, his amazing grasp of the Scriptures, his understanding of their needs and trials and temptations, his communion with God his Father, his condemnation of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees – this was gone; he was gone. They were left alone in their grief and fear.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had prepared his dead body and placed his corpse in a burial cave. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had been there and watched him being buried.

It was a dark day and it stayed that way until the following Sunday morning. Then the next statement in the Apostles' Creed came to pass:

The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

All of a sudden, on that Sunday morning, everything changed. The promises of God in the scriptures were fulfilled:

Psalm 16:10 - For you will not abandon my soul to ^(R)Sheol,
^(S)or let your ^(I)holy one see ^(U)corruption.

Isa. 53:10-12 - ^(I)when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
 he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
^(U)the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
 by his knowledge shall ^(V)the righteous one, my servant,
^(W)make many to be accounted righteous,
^(X)and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² ^(Y)Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,
^(Z)and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,

Psa. 110:1 - ^()The Lord says to my Lord:

^(B)“Sit at my right hand,
^(C)until I make your enemies your ^(D)footstool.”

I cannot end this sermon without at least mentioning the great event of that Sunday morning....

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a historical fact and in it is embedded spiritual power that is infinitely higher than the work of any other religious founder.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was a necessity because of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of humankind.

There was no way fix this gap, this gulf, this infinitely deep canyon. Man cannot make himself good enough, he cannot do enough righteous works, he cannot pay what he owes to God for his sins, he cannot reach up and bring God down – our sin, oh woe , our sin has separated us from God. God is too high and we are too low, God is too perfect and we are too imperfect, God is perfectly righteous and we have many unrighteous attitudes, thoughts, motivations, words, and deeds to our credit. The whole core of our being is corrupt and incompatible with the holiness of God.

The truth of matter is that the human race in its entirety stands under the wrath of God against our sin.

It is only the Cross that can bring reconciliation....

1 Cor. 15:3-4 - that Christ died ^(G)for our sins ^(H)in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried,

Meaning of “for our sins:”

Because of our sins

To pay the debt of our sins

R. Letham: “...God must punish sin...because of who he is and what sins is. If sin were to go unpunished it would be at the expense of God’s own holiness. Moreover, the justice of our salvation would be undermined, for our forgiveness would then flow from the mere overlooking of sin rather than from a definitive and final settlement of it. “ p. 127.

But a definitive and final settlement has been accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Only the God-Man could have done this. He wanted to do it. He did do it. He suffered untold pain under the wrath of God that he might bring us to himself – to untold joy, peace, and righteousness.

Therefore, church of God, let us serve him with devotion, gratitude, and diligence all the days of our lives.