
Sermon Notes

September 10, 2023

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord

Matthew 3:17, 17:5

The Middle

- ❖ The central part of the Apostles' Creed concerns itself with the person and work of Jesus Christ
 - the truths we find here are of paramount importance to the Christian faith
 - this is what distinguishes Christianity from all other world religions
- ❖ Summarizes truths about the Trinity, salvation, resurrection and life everlasting
 - the Creed's longest section
 - reflects the emphasis of the entire NT

A Wealth of Meaning

- ❖ *And in Jesus Christ*
 - **Jesus** = the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name, Joshua which means: God is Savior
 - **Christ** = Messiah, the anointed One
 - Jesus is the promised King who comes from the line of David and who eternally sits on David's throne

- Jesus is the Son of Man depicted in Daniel 7
 - the One who judges the living and the dead at the end of time
 - the One to who receives all authority to rule and reign over creation
- Jesus is the Suffering Servant forecast by Isaiah
 - a redeeming sacrifice offered on behalf of God's people
 - Isaiah 61:1-2, 53:1-12
- as Messiah, Jesus fulfills each of the three OT ministry roles for which men were anointed for service
 - prophet = a messenger from God
 - priest = one who mediates with God on humanity's behalf
 - king = one who represents God's rule to God's people

- ❖ *His only Son*

- the centerpiece of the opening phrase of the center section of the Apostles' Creed
- God the Father testifies to the unique Father/Son dynamic that exists between Himself and Jesus
 - at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:17)
 - at Jesus' Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5)
- the Father's testimony undercuts any notion that Jesus is just a "good man" or that He is a "Super Angel"

- Jesus testifies about His relationship with the Father in John 5:23
- the description of Jesus as God's **ONLY** Son echoes John 1:14
 - the NT describes Jesus as *the firstborn over all creation* or as *the firstborn from among the dead* not to convey that Jesus is a created being or the end result of a biological process
 - instead, such expressions underscore the **uniqueness** of Jesus' identity
 - although there are others in Scripture who are called "sons of God" (Romans 8:14, Galatians 3:26), Jesus Christ is the **ONLY**, unique, one of a kind, Son of God who actually **IS** God

❖ *Our Lord*

- the Father expresses His own pleasure in His Son
- the Father's pleasure is linked with His command that we listen to Jesus!
 - *listen to him* is a command that all who follow Jesus must obey
 - how well do we do that?
 - Jesus says, *If you love me, keep my commandments*
 - these are sobering words by which we should continually evaluate our thoughts, words and actions
 - the Father's command to listen to Jesus causes the disciples who are with Jesus to fall to the ground in a posture of humility and worship (cf. Isaiah 6:5, Luke 5:8, John 20:20)

- if Jesus Christ is God as both He and His Father claim, then Jesus has a right to rule us and we have no right to resist Christ's claim
 - *Jesus is Lord* is the earliest confession of faith known within the early church
 - Lord is a form of address that acknowledges the imperial power and authority a king holds over his subjects
 - do we acknowledge Jesus absolute authority over our lives?
 - it is easy to say the words "Jesus is Lord", but saying them in and of themselves is meaningless (Matthew 7:22-23)
 - only the Holy Spirit gives us the desire and the power to say Jesus Christ is Lord and mean it

Personal Reflection

1. How would you describe what distinguishes Christianity from other world religions in a few brief sentences?
2. Why is the confession that Jesus is God's only Son essential to the Christian faith?
3. How do all the ways in which Jesus fulfills OT expectations for Messiah reinforce your confidence in His unique identity as God's anointed One?
4. When God the Father testifies to the unique relationship that exists between Him and His Son, He tells Jesus' followers to "listen to Him". How careful and intentional are you about listening to and obeying Jesus? How do listening to and obeying Jesus intersect with confessing Him as Lord?