

Romans 10:9-10

“Jesus is Lord”

4th Sunday af. Epiphany

January 29, 2017

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

[Introduction]

At the heart of the Divine Service is the creed.

Either after the sermon to after the offering, we join in saying the creed.

[Confession] Paul makes this striking statement in Romans 10:9-10:

***“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord
and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
For by the heart you believed to righteousness,
and by your mouth you confessed to salvation.”***

Paul makes it very clear to us: CHRISTIANS CONFESS. It is as simple as that!

And what they confess is Jesus Christ – That is why we are Christ-IANS.

We confess Jesus Christ who suffered, died and rose again
for the forgiveness of sins.

Christ is confession – “and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:11).

[Confess] You know, we confess in many ways.

Every day we confess what our hopes and dreams are by our words and actions.

How often have we made the statement, “I believe,” about this or that?

Such a statement is a creed.

The root of our English word creed is the Latin “credo,”
which simply means, “I believe.”

Ranging from the absurd to the sublime,
Americans confess their belief in Bigfoot, UFOs and reincarnation,
as well as Jesus Christ
as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Thus,

to confess means to “make known together” or to “speak together.”

To confess is to “same say.”

***“Let us join together in confessing our faith using the words of the creed.
When other ask what you believe, you respond and say...”***

[*Early Creeds*]

Legend has it – yes, legend

that each of the apostles contributed 1/12th of the creed.

Though there is no strong evidence for this tradition,

the teaching of the creed that bears their name does, indeed, capture faithfully
the content of the apostolic preaching and teaching.

The first of the three “articles” of the Apostles’ Creed
confesses the Father who creates and preserves all things.

The second article, which forms the center of the creed,
confesses Jesus Christ as true God and true man,

who died, rose from the dead and will come again.

The third article confesses the Holy Spirit

as He who “calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church.”

The Apostles’ Creed is used when we administer Baptism.

[*Controversies*]

Not only do creeds teach us what to believe, they teach us what *NOT* to believe.

Early in the fourth century,

a priest by the name of Arius taught that Jesus was God’s first creation
and inferior to God the Father – something less than truly God.

This teaching threw the church into chaos.

An ecumenical council was called and held in the town of Nicea.

This council produced the first version of the Nicene Creed,
which, after several additions, is the creed that we confess in the church today.

Like the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed is divided into three articles and has an
emphasis upon the second article that teaches about Jesus Christ.

By confessing that Jesus is

“God of God, Light of Light, very God of Very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,”
this creed condemns the teaching of Arius.

Today we generally use the Nicene Creed in our celebration of the Lord's Supper.

A similar concern stood behind the writing of the Athanasian Creed. Named after Athanasius who argued at Nicea for the importance of defending the trinity, this creed in brief and very emphatic statements lays out the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and, in particular, of the person of Christ as the true God and true man in one person.

Because of its great length, we tend to only use it on Holy Trinity Sunday.

[Ecumenical]

The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds are called the "ecumenical creeds." That means they are generally accepted by the church throughout the world.

And we get the joy to say or confess them together!

As we confess the creeds today,
we are confessing not only with those who are with us that day in church,
we confess with all Christians around the world who hold to the faith.

But there is more!

We confess not only with those of our time and world,
we confess with "angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven"
as the pastor says in the communion liturgy.

As we confess our faith together, the barriers of time and space are overcome.
We join our voices together with the whole church of all time.

[Conclusion]

Sunday after Sunday, as we confess the church's creeds, we confess individually and with the church of the past, the present and the future.

In the historic creeds, every tongue does indeed confess... Jesus is Lord. Amen.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! AMEN!