

# Sermon – Apostles Creed Week 3

## He is Risen - He is Judge

Today we're into part three of our series on the Apostles Creed and we are looking at what we mean when we say we believe that:

*On the third day (Jesus) rose again, he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

So far we have at the truths of faith telling us that:

- God created the world,
- This same God is our Father
- The virgin birth attests that Jesus Christ is God's only Son
- Jesus was a real actual human person in History
- The one who came to save us, died.

Bit of a cliff hanger to have left the story there. I hope it didn't cause you any loss of sleep. I used the word "story" then because that is what we have been given to hear and to retell.

The bible is the "story" of God's relationship with us, human beings, since the beginning. Not in the sense of a made-up story but more of a family history... the story of where we come from and who we are.

Unlike human histories though the our God family story has past, present and future stories. Let me ask you a question...

*What would it take for you to trade your life for someone else's?*

I don't mean in a moment of panic or unexpected trauma. But as a planned perhaps lifelong journey to that event?

What would it take for **YOU** to be OK with the Idea that you are a sacrifice for someone else's life?

For Jesus the answer was.... YOU! Jesus gave up his life for YOU.

***BUT NOT SO YOU COULD HAVE THIS LIFE!***

He gave up his life so you and I and everyone who will believe will live their eternal life with Him in heaven. It is really important that every person on the planet to understands:

- we already have eternal life...
- the only dispute... the only question...
- is where will we spend it.

We left off last week with Jesus in the tomb but today we're going to see that:

- Jesus' resurrection changes everything
- Jesus' ascension puts him where he belongs
- Jesus' return will put all wrongs right again

The first Christians took their belief in the resurrection very seriously.

- For them there was no spiritual or psychological resurrection but a real physical bodily resurrection
- Jesus broke bread with people, ate breakfast and walked with his friends after his resurrection.
- This was not a hallucination or some sort of poetic 'Jesus is alive in our hearts 'kind-a-thing'
- Jesus actually, physically died and rose again.
- Paul is unashamed about his belief the physical bodily resurrection of Jesus.

To prove this to the Corinthians he presents the best evidence he has: eyewitness accounts from people who are still alive as he writes including Peter and over 500 hundred other witnesses.

- who saw Jesus die on Friday and come back alive on Sunday,
- they saw him walking, talking, eating
- demonstrating from the Bible that this was God's plan all along

Even though I don't have enough time to outline all the evidence with you today I want to encourage you to do your homework. Look at the recommended extras in the workbook. Why is the resurrection important? Because...

*If Jesus stayed dead then the Christian faith is a lie, made up and repeated by dishonest people... including Jesus who claimed while he was alive that this is what would happen.*

The resurrection:

- **Confirms** that Jesus was really who he said he was...
- **Vindicates** Jesus' righteousness as the one who died not only for himself but for all...
- **Demonstrates** his victory over death and sets that as the way for all who follow him...
- **Guarantees** our forgiveness and declares that death has lost its sting for all who believe in him...
- **Ushers** in the reality of resurrection life here and now and not just in the age to come!

***The resurrection fills our lives with meaning and purpose beyond compare. It really does change everything!***

So why couldn't Jesus rise from the dead and stay?

The simple answer is that the ascension puts Jesus back where he belongs... as the King of Glory at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. This is good news for you and I. We now have a direct connection to God himself.

Jesus is representing you in God's court, you have direct access to God because of your relationship with Jesus.

One day all who follow Jesus will enter into God's presence, to live with him: LIFE AS GOD ALWAYS INTENDED

- We don't need to sacrifice anything of ourselves.
- pay anyone anything, win anything, or overcome anyone.
- perform any sort of ritual, or do good works.

In fact, for God to require you to do any of those things... even good works... makes Jesus death and resurrection meaningless.

Many believe the world will be destroyed by an asteroid, nuclear war or pollution. But not God.

- While governments around the world either reject or ignore Jesus and
- celebrities and public figures hold themselves up as idols promising salvation through this or that and

- individuals, even some Christians, still think that they can run their lives better than God can
- we're not listening to what we're reciting in the creed.

The creed tells us that Jesus' return will bring about the end of all things.

Rather than chaos and destruction this ending will bring in order and will put all wrongs to right. Making this right by any measure **MUST** include some form of Judgement.

*Only Jesus can judge us because, only Jesus knows us fully and knows all things.*

An earthly judge can only look at the evidence available and for all of us that would see our bad deeds far outweigh the good ones, with an inevitable judgement of guilty.

But the bible teaches us that because "none are righteous" a righteous 'sacrifice' was made on our behalf. An atonement that means Jesus is not only our Judge but our character reference.

On the last day (judgement day) Jesus will judge with full knowledge of who we are and with the promise that

*there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus.  
For the power of the life-giving Spirit,  
and this power is mine through Christ Jesus,  
has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)*

This year the worldwide Church is celebrating the theme of HOPE.

We have HOPE because

*Jesus died and rose again... according to the scriptures...  
is seated at the right hand of the Father  
and will both intercede for us and judge us on the last day*

And as we will so rightly celebrate on Easter Sunday... we can say...

**Hallelujah.... JESUS IS RISEN!**