

Fil-Am Community Church
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Apostles Creed
Heaven & Earth

“Not by Chance, Creator of Heaven & Earth”

Good morning Fil-Am it is so good to see so many of you here this morning, OK for time's sake let's get into the word of God, or more importantly let's get the Word of God into you.

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come again 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."

Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth."*

At the conclusion of the first part of the Apostles Creed we profess our belief that God the Father is the maker of Heaven and Earth. This simply points back to the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning."

The early church understood this concept in a deeply profound way. They faced a pagan world that believed the universe was eternal and whatever gods existed were only finite parts of this world.

According to the early Church, the first essential differences between the Christian God and the gods of the pagans were that the Christian God was the maker of Heaven and Earth.

In the theology, hymns, and creeds of the early church, the doctrine of creation was viewed as the beginning point of all theology.

All of the other attributes of God made sense only in the context of a God who existed prior to, independent of, and apart from the space-time universe that he created out of nothing, for his own Glory.

Simply put in their mind was of God is not the creator, and then he is not God.

Another way of putting it is either **God is Lord of all or not Lord at all!**

We must bow in humility and awe before a God created everything, which is beyond human reason and experience. His is one reason the author says in Hebrews 11:1, "*Faith is the conviction of things not seen.*"

The confession of God as creator of everything is the first sentence of the Holy Scriptures and the first article of the Creed. It has first place in both the Bible and the faith of the Church.

Yet, what relevance does such a confession have in our world?

The answer becomes evident when we examine the popular world views which direct so many lives.

The goods and luxuries of this life have become virtually the chief concern of many moderns.

Materialism is a pervading philosophy of our day, affecting the way in which even Christians live. The focus is upon the created things of this world, their use and acquisition. It is difficult for many to get beyond this.

Our world is one in which the vision of a good greater than the immediate satisfaction (microwave mentality) of wants is lost in the bombardment of advertisements, calling us to desire, love and long for the goods of the world themselves. So we forget to look beyond the objects to the **source of all created good.**

Our hopes and lives are given to the transient. The meaning and value of creation as understood in the Creator is lost in the dulling passion to possess and to use.

Ours is a society which has **lost** an understanding of its source. And without an awareness of the source from which we come and who we are because of it, we lose an understanding of destiny and purpose.

This tears away our basic values regarding the importance of human life and the fundamentally religious nature of profound moral and ethical questions.

Given the immense powers of our growing technology, we lack the moral insight and courage to use them in a way which would be of maximum benefit to the human race. Instead, we face the specter of self-annihilation.

Mankind cries out, “Who am I?” and, more profoundly, “Why am I?”

The Christian faith has set forth answers which are rooted in the scriptural idea of God as the Creator of all.

The confession is so simple; however the meaning and its implications are profound.

We will examine a few aspects to the statement, **God created the world.**

First, there is the emphasis upon the God who did the creating.

I. God Created the World

One God did the creating and thus this world was created by a single will. Creation is not the result of chance or an afterthought, as some ancient Near Eastern myths taught. They saw the world emerging as the result of battles among their gods or to provide extra labor so that the gods would not need to work so much. Modern materialist views explain the world as coming about as a result of the chance meeting of various forces in the universe. However, this is not the Christian view.

This world reflects a single purpose in all its creation. There is thus a meaning to the universe. This provides a basis for assigning value to the

created order, and for a positive emphasis on the ecology of our world and especially human life. Thus humanity can order its life together in society and in family in such a way as to reflect God's will.

We consider the act of creating itself. This is an act which has no parallel in our experience or imagination; for at the beginning of space and time, indeed, before the existence of space and time, God acted.

Creation is the process by which God brought being out of nonbeing. Though this is something completely outside the experience of any creature, it has significance beyond metaphysical speculation. God's act of creation from nothing excludes the possibility of any other will or force being "mixed in."

The world is not the result of two sources, God and some uncreated substance. It is solely the result of God's creative will. There is therefore no dualism, no struggle of good against evil in which the outcome is uncertain.

God is in final control of the universe.

- ✓ There is thus no escape from God,
- ✓ No way to turn anything into an adequate weapon to oppose Him.
- ✓ His will alone is the source of all that is.

On the other hand, materialism seeks value in creation apart from God.

This is why the world focuses its main attack on the Biblical doctrine of Creation. They revived the old Greek idea of evolution in order to cut the main point of Christianity, because once God is no longer viewed as the creator of Heaven and Earth, then he no longer the God who gives the world its existence.

He thus becomes just one of many gods, all of whom derive their existence from the world!

If the biblical teaching on creation is removed or watered down, the faith will not be the same.

The doctrine clearly reveals that God is the sovereign over all his creation; remove the doctrine and he is not sovereign and we are not accountable to him, in fact we could take it a step further and say that there is no basis for ethics and morality.

- ✓ It overlooks the dependence of all things upon their Creator.
- ✓ It attributes a worth to the dependent thing which is due solely to the Creator, source of all.
- ✓ It is thus rightly called idolatry and condemned.

Not trying to oversimplify the issue but there are three things we can take away from the above.

- ✓ The Bible affirms that God existed before anything else; and that he is the creator of everything!
- ✓ The Bible affirms that God created everything that exists by decree; he called everything into existence.
- ✓ The Bible affirms that God created everything after its kind (Gen 1) this rules out the idea that from one form evolved all the species.

So regardless of the debate about the age of the earth, fossils, etc. there is a straightforward declaration that the Bible clearly teaches is that God is the creator of everything.

When the world is viewed separately from its Creator, the values in it are distorted and the attempt to control and use it can become a means of obscuring the purposes for which God originally created you. Modern man, in seeking to possess and gain control of the material world, has in fact become enslaved to it.

This leads us to a fourth aspect of the confession.

II. The World which God Created.

Here the emphasis falls upon the world which God created. Although He used no preexisting matter in His work of creation, neither did God use any part of Himself to create the world.

God is “separate” from the world which He created.

- ✓ He is in no way dependent upon the world, but rather is transcendent from it.
- ✓ God does not require the world for His existence,
- ✓ Although the world has and continues to require God for its existence.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this “separation” of God from His world is the possibility of a truly free will in humans.

Fundamental in Christian theology to the meaning of personhood (created in the image of God—Genesis 1:27) is the ability to make free moral and spiritual decisions.

The human is therefore able to make decisions and to take the responsibility for them. The person is not a collection of impersonal forces which chance has somehow raised to the level of consciousness and endowed with the illusion of free will.

Nor is the person somehow secretly controlled by God. The ability to make free moral choices lies at the heart of what it means to be human.

And God can and has created moral freedom. He has limited Himself by refusing to enter uninvited into the inner recesses of the human soul.

We may **choose** or **reject** the Creator from whom and for whom we were made. This choice is the starting point of all true faith.

Genesis 1:1 then may be seen as a confessional statement. It is faith in God as Creator of heaven and earth which provides the necessary basis for understanding our worth and role in relationship to God and to the Church of which we are a part.

The Creation account of the opening chapters of the Holy Scriptures is not intended to serve the interests of science, history, or any other discipline; it is rather meant to form the basic level of understanding upon which faith can move.

This is not to deny the truthfulness of Scripture where it touches upon matters of science and history; rather it is to assert the priority of faith to any other consideration.

When God created the world, He put it in order.

III. Implications of God Creating the World

It is important to remember that God not only created the world out of nothing, it will also be useful to remind ourselves that God not only created, he is still creating.

Each of us came into the world, was conceived and born with a body and soul.

- ✓ The body we received from our parents
- ✓ The soul for each of us was individually, distinctively, separately and immediately created by God.

Let me remind you again that God do not just create the universe but every human being ever conceived.

OK so now we ask ourselves so what, now that I have all that information what am I to do with it?

The number of these implications is endless and we could preach every single Sunday on the same subject and still never run out of material to preach about.

So for time's sake we will just cover a few here this morning.

The first implication is Humility,

1. Humility

There was a story of the famous inventor Samuel Morse who was once asked if he ever encountered situations where he didn't know what to do. Morse responded, "More than once, and whenever I could not see my way clearly, I knelt down and prayed to God for light and understanding."

Morse received many honors from his invention of the telegraph but felt undeserving. I have made a valuable application of electricity not because I was superior to other men but solely because God, who meant it for mankind, must reveal it to someone and he was pleased to reveal it to me.

Humility is living the truth, and that truth is that before God in his goodness brought us into being, we were exactly, mathematically, and as they say in PHILOSOPHY, metaphysically, we were nothing, and that is what we need to understand that except for the Gift of God's creation we would be nothing.

In practice we must not consider ourselves more than we really are.

One of the consequences of our having been made by God out of nothing is that we have no claim to anything on our own, as it all came from him!

Everything we are and everything we have is a Gift from God. We should enjoy it but always remember where it came from.

2. Gratitude

The second implication is gratitude, and we have to ask ourselves why did God create me?

Dangers of taking our blessings for Granted.

One particular temptation of maturing Christians is the danger of getting accustomed to his blessings.

Like the world traveler who has been everywhere and seen everything, the mature Christian is in danger of taking his blessings for granted and getting accustomed to them they fail to excite us as they once did.

Emerson said that of the stars came out only once a year, everyone would stay up all night to behold them.

The problem is we have seen the stars so often that we don't bother to look at them anymore. We have grown accustomed to our blessings.

The same thing happened to the Israelites in the Wilderness, they grew accustomed to their blessings.

God fed them daily “Manna” from heaven each morning, and yet the people were tired of it.

They were experiencing a miracle of God’s provisions every morning, yet they were no longer excited about it.

One of the evidences that we have grown accustomed to our blessings is this spirit of criticism and complaining instead of thanking God for what we have, we complain about it and tell him we wish we had something else.

The person who has gotten accustomed to his blessing can never be satisfied.

Getting back to the second implication gratitude, and we have to ask ourselves why did God create me?

The answer is very simple; it is because he loved us!

God loved us before he made us.

Jeremiah 1:5, *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.”*

Because of this our Gratitude should be endless. There are three ways we can show our gratitude to God...

- ✓ Thanks-Thinking
- ✓ Thanks-Saying
- ✓ Thanks-Giving

How thoughtless I, you, we can be in not thinking grateful thought for all that God has given us and is constantly giving us.

We should express our gratitude in words. For example, Thank you Lord for your goodness to me, who deserves nothing less than to be punished for my sins.

Grateful thoughts would lead to grateful actions. Not only will I give back to God what he has generously given to me, but I will do so with an attitude of gratitude.

3. Confidence

The next implication of our faith in God's creation is confidence.

Seeing all that God has given us, all that he has done for us from the moment of our first existence to present, can we possibly doubt how POWER and GOODNESS in the future.

Our HOPE is grounded in our faith.

We believe that everything we have and possess and enjoy is all a gift from God.

We must be confident that we shall receive from the same God who has been so good to us in the past, that we should remain faithful even unto death.

Why?

Because we are also confident that the moment we pass that threshold from this life to the next into eternity, that this same God will be there waiting to receive us home!

The next implication is Peaceful Reliance.

4. Peaceful Reliance

If you look at our country the United States of America with all our advances and opportunities, and yet worry is still almost epidemic.

The single most flourishing profession in the health sciences is the profession of Psychiatry, because people are so anxious and worried about what the future holds.

We, as Christians have nothing to fear from God, provided we are faithful to his will.

We must agree how weak we are when it comes to trial and temptations, as well as missed opportunities. However, our grateful peaceful reliance on our creator and Lord almighty is the single most effective remedy to anxiety.

The next implication is Adoration

5. Adoration

God is to be adored for his...

- ✓ His Greatness
- ✓ His Power
- ✓ His Majesty
- ✓ His Blessings
- ✓ His Protection

The list is endless!

We must come to a place where we realize that the highest purpose of our existence is to reveal his Greatness!

We are to be his

- ✓ Reflection in the world,
- ✓ We are his testimony
- ✓ His Masterpiece of creation

How do we show our adoration to him?

We do it in our loving acceptance of his will in our lives.

We follow him and him alone, and will never be slaves to anyone except the Almighty.