

THE BIG IDEA: When we heed the creed, we'll have who we need.The Take-Off

As I told you last week, we're in at least a 2 part message about creeds

Remember, when I say creed, I don't mean the movie of the band

Creeds are like the things our dads always told us that we knew were important enough to make sure we remembered

The only difference is that these came from the early church fathers instead of our earthly fathers and they dealt with spiritual truths, not just life principles

Creeds are clear and common, not comprehensive

They help us understand the fences, the umbrella, the boundaries within which we can discuss differences and still know that we're on the same page, so to speak

I told you that "Keep Pounding" was a 2 word creed for the Carolina Panthers

That phrase identifies me as a Panthers fan with a whole nation of Panthers fans even though we may not agree on whether or not the Panthers should have let Cam go

In the Bible, Ephesians 4:1-6 shows us another example

Now, I'm not trying to re-preach the message from last week, but I do want to make sure that we see the idea of creeds in the Bible, and this passage helps remind us what a creed is and also sets us up to tackle our second question about creeds: "What's the point of creeds?"

1. What's the point of creeds?

- a. Let's look briefly at the beautiful creed found in Ephesians 4:1-6
- b. This is definitely a review from last week, but we need it to uncover one of the purposes of creeds
 - v. 1 / the context
 - v. 2 / the tools necessary
 - v. 3 / the goal (unity)
 - vv. 4-6 / the plan for keeping unity
- c. We know from last week what creeds are - a guiding principle or set of fundamental beliefs
- d. But what's the point of creeds?
- e. I can think of at least 2 - I'm sure there are many more
- f. One, to learn what matters most (or remember what matters most)
 - Creeds were considered useful for helping believers take all of the Bible and boil it down to the very most essential truths
 - As an example, the Bible has over 750,000 words in it (all important!)
 - The Apostles Creed has 105 (or 109, if you use a later version of it)
 - Also, there was question about how a new believer could be baptized without knowing all of the Bible
 - The creed allowed for them to memorize the essential parts and then enter into a life of growing in their knowledge of the whole
 - The creeds don't discount the whole - they summarize the whole
 - Augustine said that the central teachings of Christianity are scattered here and there in Scripture. So, the ancient churches summarized Scripture's core doctrines in creeds. This ensured that every believer - even, as he put it, "slow" or uneducated persons - could affirm and hold fast to the fundamental teachings of Scripture.
 - What about now? One scholar, Dr. Paul Chang, said we should continue to use the creed "because we can't require people to understand the whole Bible before we accept them as Christians. The Apostles' Creed still summarizes the essential teachings of the Bible in a simple way. And for this reason, it must continue to be used even now."
 - Think about that word "essential"
 - Saying one thing is essential doesn't discount everything else as unimportant
 - If you've ever lost your job, Netflix stops being essential because you'd rather eat
- g. Two, to grow with who matters most (even when we don't agree)
 - For the second answer to "what's the point of creeds" we need to keep reading in Ephesians 4
 - Creeds - knowing what we all believe - allow us grow with people who agree with us on the goal even if they don't agree with us on the game plan

- vv. 11-12 / 5 very different gifts, approaches, viewpoints on how
- v. 13 / 1 very specific goal - unity seen in
 - a stable body (14)
 - a mature body (15)
 - a functioning body (16)
- We'll never accept the different parts if we aren't united on the one plan, and creeds allow us to grow with WHO matters the most

The Landing

Last week I told you that when we heed the creed, we'll have what we need

This week our Big Idea changes one very important word: **when we heed the creed, we'll have WHO we need**

I don't mean that we use a hard line to throw people away, but rather that the creeds and the unity that they bring us actually keep us from throwing people away

Too many factions happen because we don't agree on every little opinion

Evangelists don't think that pastors are evangelistic enough

If we forget we're united around one faith, one Lord, one body, the evangelist goes out to start his or her own ministry

The end result? The body suffers because now the evangelistic voice is missing in that local body

Creeds help us avoid those types of "preferential" divisions and keep all of us working together toward the goal

When we heed the creed, we'll have who we need