



CREEDS: One God - The Father // "I believe in God the Father."

Why, of all titles, would the maker of all things choose this relational designation for himself? Scripture describes this fatherliness as procreation and causation in relationship, from procreator to child.

1 Corinthians 8:6 - ... Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live...

Galatians 4:6 - ... God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

Ephesians 1:17 - I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Ephesians 3:14 - For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

1 John 3:1 - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

So, instead of a critique of this particularity, scripture leads me back to aligning my heart and actions with the expression of whom he's describing himself to be. The name "Father" exposes and redeems my own broken relational framework. And in the failures of this name, I see that he is closer; in the best of fatherliness, I see a reflection of his good and faithful intentions to us as his children.

Read: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Questions for Reflection:

1. Do you believe in God, as Father? Why or why not?

2. If you could change the designation for God in scripture, what would it be? Why?
3. What does this reveal, or help you assess in relationship to the Father?

Everything changes when it comes to the Father, Son and Spirit. Here is a God who is not essentially lonely, but who has been loving for all eternity as the Father has loved the Son in the Spirit. Loving others is not a strange or novel thing for this God at all; it is at the root of who he is as a Father.

— Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*

Prayer:

My Father over all things, it's awesome to see that you're my father and I am your child! I believe that you love me with an infinite love. I believe that you are watching over me night and day and that not a hair falls from my head without your permission. I believe that in your infinite wisdom, you know better than I what is good for me. I believe that in your infinite power, you can bring good even out of evil. I believe that in your infinite goodness, you make everything to the advantage of those who love you. I believe, but increase my faith, hope, and love! Father, You know everything; You see everything; You know me better than I know myself; You can do everything, and You love me.



CREEDS: Jesus - The Only Son

A child is a small representation of a family community, and even rebellious kids still possess undeniable characteristics of their parents and siblings. Similarly, the essence of the Son of God is an expressive revelation of the Father's family. Qualities of oneness, joy, faithfulness, and sacrifice come to mind as words revealed in the Son, but these concepts are rooted in the stories of Christ's mutual interaction with us and the Father. A broad overview of these expressions are a reminder to us of his personality and oneness with God.

John 1:3 - Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:18 - No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Colossians 1:15 - The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation..

2 Corinthians 5:21 - God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Hebrews 2:17 - For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

The creation of the universe, the centuries of interaction with Israel, a miraculous man-God oneness led by the Spirit of God, an atoning death marked by the wrath of the Father so that we could be guiltless, powerful resurrection over death and sin, and a sending of his Spirit-- all of these are a revelation of the character of the Father with his family.

Read: John 3:9-21

Questions for Reflection:

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Father's primary revelation?
- With the Father's love being so generously expansive, how do you feel about the statement, "Whoever trusts in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not trusted in the name of God's one and only Son."
- What do you think it means, in practice, to walk into God's light in this passage?

"The Father loves his Son, and so hates sin, which ultimately is rejection of the Son; he loves his children, and so hates their being oppressed; he loves his world, and so hates all evil in it. Thus in his love he roots out sin in his people, even disciplining them that they might be freed from their captivity to it. In his love he is patient with us. And in his love he promises finally to destroy all evil as light destroys darkness."

— Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*

Prayer:

Christ, thank you for revealing the embodied love of the Father. It's too big to hardly realize! You are my creator. You are my healer. You are my atonement. You are my resurrection. You are my King. Thank you that your jealousy calls me into a deeper trust of your faithfulness. I love you.



CREEDS: Death, burial, resurrection, ascension – The Gospel

The word Gospel (euaggelion, εὐαγγέλιον) is a proclamation of hopeful news. The essence of our hope is the person of Jesus, entering into the story of a broken, rebellious humanity revealing the way back to the Father. This isn't a metaphor for some ephemeral mystery; this is a tangible death by a real man, with very practical outcomes.

He was offered to us as a protection from the holy wrath of the Father, and as an embrace into the holiness of God.

He has ransomed us from death into his life.

He became sin for us. He took our shame.

He laid his life down and picked it back up.

He exalts us to the Father.

He prays for us.

This was intended before creation began, it's being expressed to you this very second, and this hopeful news will carry on into eternity!

John 1:18 - No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

1 Corinthians 15:21-26 - For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the first fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Read: Acts 2:22-33

Questions for Reflection:

- Do you believe that Jesus is the Father's primary revelation?
- With the Father's love being so generously expansive, how do you feel about the statement, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."
- What do you think it means, in practice, to walk into God's light?

We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by "looking unto Jesus... the center, the cornerstone, the jewel in the crown of Christianity is not an idea, a system or a thing; it is not even "the gospel" as such. It is Jesus Christ."

— Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*

Prayer:

Christ, thank you for revealing the embodied love of the Father. It's too big to hardly realize! You are my creator. You are my healer. You are my atonement. You are my resurrection. You are my King. Thank you that your jealousy calls me into a deeper trust of your faithfulness. I love you.



CREEDS: One God - Holy Spirit

The Father has given us the Son to reveal himself: his unconditional love, his fiery holiness, his forgiving atonement wrapped in close relationship. The Son further involves us in the experience of family by indwelling us with the person described as the Spirit of Holiness. The Spirit's visual representation in scripture is depicted as a holy fire, water, a dove, and in you as the Church. If you follow Christ and his way, the very desire to listen to his Word and obey him reveals that the Spirit is indwelling you (Rom 8:14-16). He pulled you up out of death and breathed life into your soul.

Secondarily, the Spirit has given you means to care for the church and world through the Spirit's power. You've been given access to every spiritual blessing. You've been given gifts to challenge and comfort others. We have access to this same relationship, just as the Spirit filled and directed Christ.

Read: 1 Corinthians 2:7-16, 2 Peter 1:17-21, 1 John 3:23-24

Questions for Reflection:

- What are the main motivations and intentions of the Spirit?
- The Spirit is definitely mysterious, but from these passages how do you practically see the Spirit interacting with scripture?
- In what areas of your life, or circumstances, is the Spirit encouraging you to trust Christ with?

"...the Spirit is not about bringing us to a mere external performance for Christ, but bringing us actually to love him and find our joy in him. And any performance 'for him' that is not the expression of such love brings him no pleasure at all..."

— Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*

Prayer:

Pause and remember the stories of how the Spirit has revealed Christ to you in the past. What happened? Then pray: Thank you for showing me Jesus, thank you for pouring a love for him into my soul. Give me joy and strength as you continue to guide me into his presence.



CREEDS: Second Coming

So much of Christ's return is muddled by speculation, predictions and contrasting theories. However, the simplicity of our story is that the disciples watched Jesus ascend into the clouds, and heard a reminder that he will return in the same way. So we wait expectantly to see the reigning King's return. He will show up to our little tiny blue dot with scars on his body, a crown over his head, and finality on his mind. He will bring us home as his family, clothing us in undying holiness. Face-to-face. Safe. Without fear. Abundance. Feasting. Dancing. Hope.

Jesus also told many stories of warning and reward to strengthen our resolve as we wait. "You will have great reward! (Matt 16:27) Watch! (Lk 12:35-40) Stay awake! (Rev 16:15)" James 1:12 concludes, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

Read: 2 Peter 3

Questions for Reflection:

- What does this passage cause you to feel? Awe? Fear? Hope?
- If Jesus simply showed up at your house today how would you feel in the moment? Would you run out the back? Hide? Look busy? Fling the door off of it's hinges?
- Our response to this thought is a quick image of our relationship with him. Similarly in this passage, Peter is ushering us into the presence of Christ. God with us, Christ coming again, to be with us.

When He returns, He will overturn and heal all sin and death and pain. His blessings will flow into all of this, undoing death, undoing that great pain in childbirth, undoing marital difficulties, thorns, thistles. The heavens and the earth, the whole cosmos will be restored and revived. He will mend it all, for it is His. He will undo all chaos. He will

bind His original handiwork back together. Jesus called it "the renewal of all things" when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne.

--Michael Reeves, All Things New

Prayer:

Shout for joy to the Lord all the earth.

Burst into jubilant song with music, with the blast of trumpets.

Shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

Let the sea resound and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands.

Let the mountains sing for joy.

Let them sing for you come to judge the earth.

You will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Our glorious Father, oh how we praise You for that day.

Come, send Your great Son. Send Him once again. Come, Lord Jesus.