

We Believe Part 2

We are examining the core beliefs of the Christian faith and using the Apostle's Creed as our framework. The creed, a concise statement of belief and a confession of our faith.

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. We say it effortlessly, matter of fact, but perhaps without the awe and wonder that it should invoke within us. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker, Creator, Designer, Originator, the One who brought forth all that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and he created it all out of nothing. When we stop to think about that, we may realize perhaps our God, the God we think about when we think of God, the God we pray to with our worries and fears, the God we place our trust in for salvation and for handling our future, that God is too small. Oddly enough, we tend to make ourselves larger and greater than we really are and we make God smaller and less significant than he really is.

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. That's what we said, but what do we really think when we think about God? You teachers may remember a Swiss fellow named Jean Piaget. He formulated a theory regarding the cognitive development of children. He used a term, *schema* to refer to essentially a category of information. Think of it like a file that children use to categorize information as they grow. For instance, maybe there is a file called "horsey" and anything that is large, furry and has four legs goes into that file. A cow, a sheep, a dog, all can go into that file. We tell the child, "No, that's not a horsey, that's a cow" and they learn to expand that file, differentiating information, moving from general to specific.

We teach our children about God and a file is created. God is big. God is good. God is love. God is watching you. The child then stores information and facts about God. This is part of the process of faith development for all of us. We create this file and have immediate access to it. Mention God and all the ideas we have placed in that file are pulled up and accessed. A couple of concerns: 1) We want to make sure the information we are gathering about God is the truth and comes from a reliable source. That means the bible, the witness of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the church. 2) We want to make sure that the information we gather in that file about God continues to grow along with the other files in our mind. The concern is that we expand the file for every other topic and experience, but the file for God and faith remains untouched. The file that used to read "horsey" has been expanded to include multiple breeds of

horses. We have learned to differentiate between four legged animals. Horses, cows, goats, sheep, dogs, cats, but our file for God has remained untouched, undeveloped. We grow up, go off to college and onto a career. We learn all kinds of things, true and not so true and our files continue to grow and be refined. But unless we continue to maintain a vibrant relationship with God through prayer and study and worship and fellowship with others, that file associated with God and spiritual things remains like it was when we were children and will seem childish and naive to us. The result is a view of God that is hardly accurate and we dismiss God along with belief in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. We think we've outgrown God, but that's because we made our God too small. We haven't seen him as Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. We need to discover the God of creation, the God of the bible. I know Jesus said we were to be as little children, we are to be childlike in our trust in God, childlike in innocence, childlike in our dependence upon the Lord, but we are not to be childish in our behavior or in our thinking.

The Apostle Paul said, **“When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:11-12**

We thought and learned and reasoned as a child, but as we grew, we learned and reasoned with greater maturity, with greater understanding and based on greater experience. Have we made room for a greater revelation of God as we've grown? I'm not suggesting you forget what you learned as a child about God (unless what you learned was contrary to the bible) but simply that we open our hearts and minds to discover God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, because that God, the God of the bible desires to reveal himself and make himself known to all of us. If you don't believe me, just look around.

The apostle Paul in the book of Romans says God has made plain to us some things about himself in creation. **“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” Romans 1:20.** Being understood from what has been made or created. All of God's creation testifies of Him being the Father Almighty, Creator and Maker of heaven and earth.

Someone said that perhaps the four most profound English words ever written were these: “In the beginning God.” It all starts there. That's the way the bible begins this amazing

story. In the beginning God. From the beginning, from before there was anything, God. All sufficient, not dependent upon anything or anyone, eternally existent, infinite God!

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1. I don’t know how. Six days Genesis tells us. He did it in six days. Were those literal days? I don’t know. Was there a big bang that happened at some point? I don’t know, the bible doesn’t tell us the details of how so much as it tells us who. We just know there was a beginning. There was nothing but God. And then by God’s infinite power God said “let there be” and there was. The Psalmist declared, **“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made... for he spoke and it came to be, he commanded and it stood firm.” Psalm 33:6, 9.**

The apostle Paul wrote, **“...all things were created by him and for him...” Colossians 1:16.**

Revelation 4 tells of the worship in heaven that declares, **“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” Revelation 4:11.** This is God the Creator who reveals himself to us.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. But what about evolution and what about the age of the universe and what about...? Here is what I know. More than intelligent design and more than a divine mind or a “first cause”, there is a God who created the heavens and the earth and he is the Father Almighty. There are questions to be answered and there are brilliant scientists and scholars that have theories and ideas and even some answers that also have no problem reciting the apostle’s creed with conviction, that God created the heavens and the earth. Once again, don’t let someone tell you that belief in God as Creator and maker is foolish or naive or that it conflicts with scientific evidence. There are numerous resources available that deal with the topic of science and creation and the bible, written by physicists and scientists with a solid faith in God and the bible. If you have questions or doubts, do the research.

God the Father Almighty created all that is, with order and design, with destiny and purpose, with intricacies beyond our ability to comprehend. For life to be sustainable on this planet requires such minute fine tuning that it is impossible to think it could have happened randomly. It requires more faith or naivete to believe it happened by accident or randomly than to believe in God the Creator. He created all that is out of nothing – an idea unique in the universe and even to other religions. He didn't create the universe out of existing matter, he created the matter from which he then created all that is. He existed before there was anything and he created all that is. He is God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth!

I suggested at the beginning that perhaps we have thought of God in terms that were too small. Remember I said what we believe affects how we live and the choices we make. We are small, but when we make God small, we make our faith small, we make our life and our choices small, we make our prayers and our worship small. But when we consider God the Creator and his creation that surrounds us, when we consider the stars above us and the beauty of the earth, surely it moves us to awe and wonder and worship of our God. It moves us and inspires us to greater faith in the God who is more and so much more than anything of which we can conceive.

Hear the words of the Psalmist. **“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” Psalm 19:1-4**

The testimony of the heavens and the earth declare the glory of God, in a language beyond words, night and day. Everyone, everywhere, can witness and behold evidence and knowledge of God and his beauty and his glory.

Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord declared, **“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens; Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.” Isaiah 40:25-26**

And once again from the Psalmist: **“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.” Psalm 33:6.** We mustn't make Him small. He is the God who creates stars by the breath of his mouth. He is the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth!

Some of you have seen and heard Louie Giglio speak or you have seen some of his videos. I have shown a couple of things in the past. Watch this clip. (Giglio video – Louie Giglio on the Starmaker)

This God we serve, this Almighty, all sufficient, all powerful God is Father Almighty and is maker of heaven and earth, and he is the God who knows us. If he knows the starry host one by one and calls them each by name and not one of them is missing, he knows you by name. He knows where you are and what you are dealing with. You are not lost or missing to him. The Psalmist declared, **“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.” Psalm 147:5-6.** He is awesome and great, mighty in power and his understanding has no limit, his ways are far beyond us and our ways. He is beyond what we can conceive, yet in the verse just before this the bible declares, **“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3**

He is so great, so awesome, so powerful, so mighty, so big and beyond us and yet he is near to the brokenhearted and gentle and loving enough to bind up our wounds. Father and Almighty, creator and sustainer. That is our God. Don't make him small. Declare his greatness. **We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.** And we can trust him for he doesn't just call the stars by name, he calls us by name. He knows you and he is here to bind up your wounds and heal your broken heart.