

### Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matthew 18:21-35 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in us? 3) How could we respond to what God says in this passage?

### Beginning the Conversation

1. The last three lines of the Creed are described as a “fitting culmination” to the entire confession. How does ending with forgiveness, resurrection, and eternal life shape your overall understanding of the Christian story?
2. Have you ever felt that certain failures—either yours or someone else's—were “too big” to be forgiven? How does the historical reality of the Creed’s forgiveness clause challenge that feeling?

### Digging Deeper

1. Pastor Tyler notes that “forgiveness of sins” is a concise, two-word summary of the Gospel. While the Creed could have used words like “reconciliation” or “redemption,” why is “forgiveness” a term that we can all relate to?
2. The inclusion of forgiveness in the Creed was a direct response to a 3rd-century crisis regarding “lapsed” Christians who denied Christ under Roman persecution. If the church had chosen “rigorism” (denying forgiveness) instead of grace, how would the character of the Christian faith be different today?
3. The original Creed used the word “flesh” (*sarx*) rather than the more polite word “body.” Why was it so critical for the early church to insist that our physical, material bodies matter to God and will be raised from the dead?
4. The sermon highlights the threat of gnostic thought which viewed the body and the material as evil. In what ways do we still see “gnostic” ideas today that prioritize the “spiritual” while neglecting the importance of the physical world?
5. According to John 17:3, eternal life is defined as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ. If eternal life is a “present reality” and not just a future hope, how should that change the way we live our lives?
6. McGrath suggests that entering eternal life is not experiencing something “strange and unknown,” but is an extension and deepening of our current experience of God's love. How does this perspective change your mental image of what life on the new heavens and new earth will be like?
7. “Amen” means “let it be so.” By ending the Creed this way, it makes it as much a prayer as a statement of faith. How does joining your “Amen” with the “communion of saints” transform the Creed into a collective prayer and pledge?

### Living it Out

1. In the 3rd century, the church decided that “God's grace is greater than any human failure.” Identify one area of your life—or one person you have been judging harshly—where you have chosen “rigorism” over grace. This week, take one practical step toward releasing that debt and practicing the forgiveness you have received.
2. Since eternal life is inaugurated now, it is something we must “take hold of” daily (1Tim 6:12). Identify one “new creation” habit that allows you to experience the “presence and love of God” more deeply right now?

### The Apostles' Creed\*

**I believe in God,**  
the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

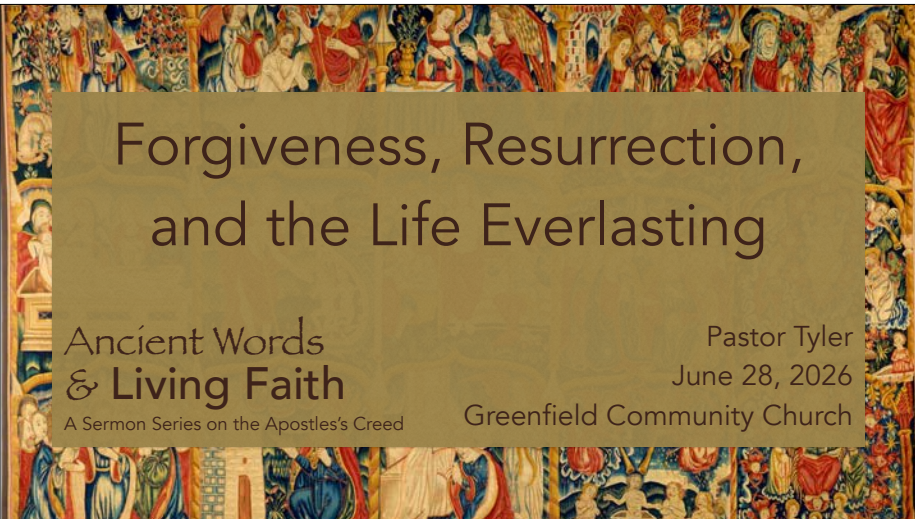
**I believe in Jesus Christ,**  
God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated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

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**  
the holy catholic<sup>[a]</sup> Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

#### Notes

[\*] This version is based on the translation of the ELLC.

[a] Catholic (small case c) means “universal.”



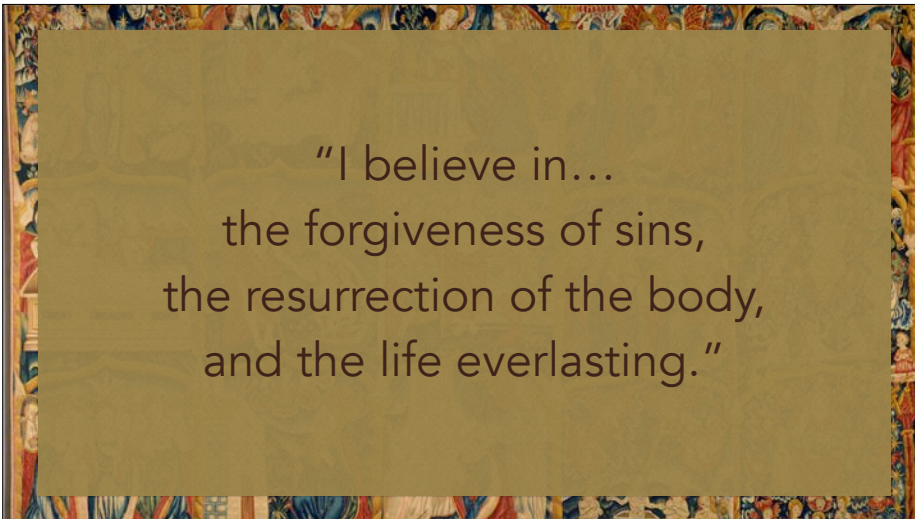
# Forgiveness, Resurrection, and the Life Everlasting

Ancient Words  
& Living Faith

A Sermon Series on the Apostles's Creed

Pastor Tyler  
June 28, 2026

Greenfield Community Church



“I believe in...  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.”



## The Forgiveness of Sins

A concise description of the Gospel.

- ♦ Jesus uses the same language at the last supper (Matt 26:28); and in a post-resurrection appearance to his disciples (Luke 24:46-47).
- ♦ Peter and Paul uses this language throughout the book of Acts (2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18).



## The Forgiveness of Sins

“The Creed assuredly rejects that view which would place forgiveness of sins as a good thing for Christian faith alongside of many others. No, says the Creed, *grace means forgiveness of sins*. And to receive grace means to receive forgiveness of sins.... Everything, absolutely everything and to the last degree, is determined and conditioned by the fact that forgiveness of sins is gifted to humanity and received by them as a gift” (Karl Barth, *Credo*, 153).



## The Forgiveness of Sins

Its inclusion in the Creed is a response to a historical crisis in the 3rd and 4th-century church.

- What to do with lapsed Christians?
- Raised the question: "Can those who denied Christ be welcomed and forgiven?"
- *God's grace is greater than any human failure and God's faithfulness is deeper than our faithlessness!*



## The Forgiveness of Sins

The Mission — A 1986 film directed by Roland Joffé and starring Jeremy Irons, Robert De Niro, and Liam Neeson.



## The Forgiveness of Sins



## The Resurrection of the Body

Lit. "The resurrection of the flesh."

- "Flesh" (σὰρξ *sarx*) – the physical body, physical body with limitations, the fallen physical body.
- The Scriptures radically affirm both the goodness of the material world and the resurrection of the body.



## The Resurrection of the Body

### Historical Controversy

- ♦ The threat of **gnostic** views that understood the world as evil and created by the god of the OT.
- ♦ Consequently, denied the incarnation and maintained that Jesus only appeared to be human (docetism).



## The Resurrection of the Body

In contrast to these gnostic views, the Creed affirms

- ♦ **Creation:** The material world is the creation of the Triune God and is "very good" (Gen 1:31).
- ♦ **Incarnation:** Jesus, the Son of God, became fully and truly human in the incarnation (John 1:14).
- ♦ **Resurrection:** As Jesus was raised from the dead, so we too will rise on that day (1Cor 15:20-23).



## The Life Everlasting

Also translated: "eternal life" (ζωην αιωνιον).

- ♦ Something that was desired (see Matt 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18).
- ♦ The future hope of salvation (John 3:16; 3:36; 4:14; 6:40; 11:25; cf. Romans 6:22-23).
- ♦ But also a present reality: "Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life" (6:47; 5:25).



## The Life Everlasting

Key: "eternal life" is both the present and future fullness of life with God.

- ♦ "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3).
- ♦ Both a present reality for those who believe and a promise of the future (1Tim 6:12).



## The Life Everlasting

"Eternal life is inaugurated, but not fulfilled in our present life as believers. To enter fully into eternal life is not to experience something totally strange and unknown. Rather, it is to extend and deepen our experience of the presence and love of God" (Alister McGrath, *"I Believe"*, 105).



## Amen

"Amen" is an expression of faith spoken at the end of prayers and liturgy, it means "let it be so," or "truly."

- By saying "Amen" at the conclusion of the Creed, we are agreeing together to what we have said and affirmed.
- We are also recognizing that the Creed is as much a prayer as it is a statement of faith.