

CREDO

- "I Believe" -

The Christian Faith in a Faithless World

Part 2

"Confessing the Faith"

2 February 2020

Introduction: What are we passionate about?

"The regression of [faith] in the present lives of men is illustrated by nothing more so than the role, which the great political powers play in our time. No religious, no [church] question can move men of our day like the great political questions. Even the struggle between the church and the "Free Thinkers" [Secularists] is for many – and certainly in no way only for the Free Thinkers – finally not a struggle of faith, but a struggle between political worldviews, concerning the question whether religion should or should not be preserved as a necessary component of culture." —Hermann Sasse

- We live in a world that is filled with amusements, causes, ideologies, etc. that are all competing for our attention and allegiance.
- One of the most helpful ways that we can determine the things that we are most passionate about is consider what things we are prone to _____ the most freely and openly about.

Key Point: The things that we _____ most deeply will be reflected in the things that we are willing to _____ publicly. Matt. 12:34b—...the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. (NASB)

Credo: "I Believe..."

- On the most basic or fundamental level, what separates us as Christians from the unbelieving world is the fact that we believe or have faith that God has revealed Himself in His Word (in Christ, His Living Word and the Bible, His written Word). To be a Christian is therefore to be a "believer."

Key Verses:

Rom. 10:9-10

A⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord

B and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

B'¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified,

A' and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

"believe" — πιστεύω (*pisteuō*)—To believe into (give oneself up to); to have trust or confidence in someone or something.

"confess" — ὁμολογέω (*homologeō*)—To acknowledge something (in public); to claim, profess, or praise.

Observations About Faith/Belief

1. Faith necessarily includes _____ assent, but that alone is not true faith.

1 Cor. 15:3-4—³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

James 2:19—You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

2. True faith includes _____ or _____ in God and His promises to us through His Son.

John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

1 John 5:1—Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

An Illustration:

"Whereas *belief* suggests bare opinion, *faith*...is a matter of treating a person or thing as trustworthy and committing yourself accordingly."
—J.I. Packer

Key Point: The most significant thing about our faith is its _____!

John 14:1—"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."

Observations About Confessing the Faith

1. Confessing the faith means acknowledging the _____ of Christ.

Acts 5:29-32—²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

2. Confessing the faith involves _____ for the faith.

Jude 3—Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

“contend”—ἐπαγωνίζομαι (*epagōnizomai*)—To exert intense effort on behalf of someone or something (either in defensive or offensive action); effort expended on behalf of a noble cause.

1 Pet. 3:13-16—¹³Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

⇒ In order to make a defense of the faith, we should be able to speak about God from His _____.

Examples: Acts 7:51-53 (Steven)—⁵¹“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Acts 8:34-35 (Philip)—³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

⇒ In order to make a defense of the faith, we should be able to speak about God from our own _____ knowledge of Him.

Examples: Acts 10:40-43 (Peter)—⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Acts 26:14-18 (Paul)—¹⁴And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ ¹⁵And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you ¹⁸to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

Key Point: Our confession of faith serves to shape our _____ as worshipers of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 10:23—Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Our Place Among the Faithful

“Christians who first said credo (“I believe”) did not do so lightly, but at the risk of their lives under severe persecution. We listen carefully to those who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their belief. To say credo genuinely is to speak from the heart, to reveal who one is by confessing one’s essential belief, the faith that makes life worth living. One who says credo without willingness to suffer, and if necessary die, for the faith has not yet genuinely said credo.” —Thomas Oden, *Classic Christianity*

1. Our knowledge of the truth should lead us to _____ for the truth.

The Martyrdom of William Hunter (Died aged 19 on 27 March 1555)

2. We never stand for the truth of God’s Word in _____.

The Hall of Faith — Hebrews 11

Heb. 12:1-2—¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.