

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ

LD 9 begins an important exposition (阐述) on the Apostles' Creed (使徒信经). We confess this Creed often and I am sure many of you can say it in your sleep because you have known it since you were young. The danger in reciting the Creed so frequently is that we stop thinking about what we are saying. It can become just words that we rehearse together and the Creed can lose its meaning and impact upon us.

As the saying goes, “familiarity breeds contempt.” Sometimes that statement can be too strong, but in other ways, the principle is surely true. When young people leave home to go to college or university for the first time, they may feel that it is good to have independence and be out on their own. However, once they’ve been gone for a couple of months, there is a feeling that sets in of, “it sure would be nice to have a meal made by my mom.” Or wow, I didn't realize all the little things my parents did for me now that I am on my own.

Parents can become very familiar and you can be unmindful of what they do for you!! Well, the lesson for us is that we should not be unmindful of the Apostles' Creed even though it is very familiar to us. There is very important truth universally accepted and taught here.

This afternoon, we look at, “**I believe in God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**”

- 1. He created me**
- 2. He provides for me**
- 3. He cares for me**

We will begin with...

1. He created me

It is the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them who still upholds and rules them by his eternal counsel (旨意) and providence (护理), is my God and Father because of Christ his Son.

This statement flies in the face of nearly everything you will read in a modern science textbook or if you watch any television program on the Discovery Channel or National Geographic. I believe in THE Creator God who made even by intelligent design! The word “Father” is then taken in the sense of originator (初始者) or maker, the one out of Whom all things exist.

He is the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Members of Trinity三位一体上帝)
ARTICLE 8 God Is One In Essence, Yet Distinguished In Three Persons

According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, who is the one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible; As the Creator of heaven and earth, God the Father made all things and retains responsibility for them. For this reason, He “still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence. So, the Catechism (教理问答) here takes a macro view of things, like an inverted pyramid (倒置的金字塔) that moves from a large perspective (视角) on down to the very small. This all-powerful Creator God has put in place absolutely everything that exists and it all came about by His sovereign (主权的) will.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

It has been only in recent times that we have begun to truly grasp how incredibly immense the known physical universe is.

Our Milky Way galaxy (银河系) contains somewhere between 100-400 billion stars, many of which are far grander than our own sun.

Have you ever visited the creation museum in Kentucky near Cincinnati?

Try to get there some time if you are able. They have a planetarium (天文馆) and the presentation at the planetarium is absolutely incredible! It begins by looking at the vast universe and then slowly moves down to the Milky Way as a little speck in one spot. Then it zooms into the Milk Way and our solar system is shown as a little spot. Then it finally zooms into the earth... **The earth is shown as a tiny speck of dust and we are even smaller on that speck of dust!!**

Lord's Day 9 starts the same with this broad view of the God of the cosmos. He made everything in 6 days by His creative ability. Then it narrows down from the galaxies to just you and me.

Compared to the intricate (错综复杂的) vastness of time and space, any one of us looks insignificant. It could lead us to think that we don't count for much because we are dwarfed by the immensity (广大) of it all. The Catechism does point us in this direction at all! The emphasis here is - The Father of Jesus/ Father of creation is my Father.

And if he is my Father, then that means He not only knows that I exist, He knows my name, He knows my life, He knows my heart, and He cares. ***He is the One who still upholds and rules by his eternal counsel and providence, is my God and Father because of Christ his Son.*** As Christian believers we say, He created me to have a covenant relationship with me **AS MY GOD AND FATHER** through Jesus His Son. ***Isaiah 43:1 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed (赎回) you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.***

He created me and upholds me and directs my life by His perfect divine will and providence as my God and Father BECAUSE OF JESUS.

And because He is my God and Father

2. He provides for me

I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world.

Here is where this LD continues to go from the macro view of things and comes down to specifically focus on what it means for us to have such a powerful, almighty creator God who is in a close relationship with us. Think of it this way, We came to the Father who made us for Himself, and who brought us to Himself through Christ and now keeps us with Himself and provides for us all we need in this life and the next.

Begins - I trust Him so much that I do not doubt. Look into your heart - can you truly say this?

David stated...

Psalm 62:7-10 ⁷ In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God. ⁸ Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah ⁹ Surely men of low degree are a vapor (雾气), Men of high degree are a lie; If they are weighed on the scales, They are altogether lighter than vapor. ¹⁰ Do not trust in oppression, Nor vainly hope in robbery; If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.

David encourages us to fully trust God and realize life is too short to trust in anything else. The Father went through all this work to restore us as His children and make us heirs through Christ. Will He then allow the devil to enslave us? Of course not, and therefore we can confess that this Father will “provide me with all things necessary for body and soul.”

Romans 8:32 ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

What about the reality of hardship? If God is so good why is there still pain and suffering for the believer?

God our heavenly Father can and does send adversity. There will be trials and afflictions which come from His Fatherly hand. There is the discipline (管教) of love which comes from above! The result is that life, still marred and scarred by sin, is not always easy. Do not lose heart by His discipline when it is a means to correct you.

Hebrews 12:5-7 ⁵ *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise (轻看) the chastening (管教) of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

Whatever adversity there may be, the heavenly Father will turn it to my good. I shall benefit and profit even from the trials and chastisement which the Father considers necessary for Me in His sovereign wisdom! The fact that we have a heavenly Father, Who cares for us in perfect love does not mean that we will never experience sorrow. This will keep us from thinking that only prosperity (丰盛) comes from the Father above. For we shall under all circumstances now—in prosperity and adversity—cling to this one God, the Father almighty! He keeps us with Himself. He never turns us away. He continues to care for us, in all things, giving in grace, even giving discipline in love.

Leads to my last point

3. He cares for me

He is able to do this because he is almighty God; he desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.

Highlights His ability and willingness/ desire to help and direct His people

His ability focuses on His attribute (属性) of Omnipotence. His ability and capacity is without limit.

God has no limitations, which involve imperfections of any kind whatsoever and transcends (超越) all the limitations of time and space.

1. This means that God can do anything!
2. God has all-ability and His power and capability extend to every realm.
4. He can move and control thoughts, actions, words, elements of nature, circumstances, anything!
5. He cannot be stopped or limited by anything.
6. There are no degrees of difficulty/ all things are equally simple and straightforward to Him.
7. Thus, this attribute declares infinite (无限的) ability, capacity, and potency (权能) in God.

Deuteronomy 32:39 *'Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; Nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.*



Now sometimes - easy to think this - that based on our experiences and difficulties - God is somehow on the sidelines watching us, but is he really there/ able to help us in our time of need.

- We have questions, God really there for me?
- Is He truly Almighty God & Father who desires my good - in troubles?
- Are my anxious thoughts really nothing or should I be truly concerned and worried?

Imagine if you had a wealthy friend who you know you could go to when things were tight and that friend had the means and was willing to help you. Would that not give you a bit more peace of mind in those tough times.

Whitefield Christian school example - Rich benefactor who helps the school

Say that sounds nice, but what about if we are on the other end of the spectrum (范围) - not have a wealthy friend?

- Testimony of Christian man from NB - true story

- Lost job/ down to his last \$5/ family - wife and 2 boys/ tried to look for job - nothing
- He thought, what am I going to do? At the end of his rope and no answer
- Prayed with His wife - pleaded with God to help - no prospects
- Next morning - phone call - woke up at 6 am / Fellow asked what are you doing?
- Get up your coming to work with me today - collecting garbage - lasted 6 months and help him just when he needed it!

We serve a God of surprises - come to a faithful Father who knows our needs before we ask Him - willing to supply that need for us - come to Him in faith

David gives us this confident refrain (叠句) in Psalm 62:1-2 & 5-6 when facing his enemies and the trials of life.

Psalm 62:1-2 Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation. ² He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.

Psalm 62:5-6 ⁵ My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him.

⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

Do you need peace? He can give it. Do you need assurance and security in your life? Salvation and stability come from Him - He is your fortress (堡垒) so that you will not be shaken.

All the spiritual and material needs which the children may have are taken care of by this Father! There is no need which He is not able or willing to meet. Our catechism says that He "desires to do this because he is a faithful father." I hope that is comforting to you.

There is someone who loves you dearly.

There is someone who cares for you...one who will dry the tears from your eyes, one who thinks you are worth something...that one is the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth.

God is the all-powerful creator of heaven and earth. He is capable and desirous to save his own special people, to call them His own, to put his own name on them.

Psalm 62:11-12 ¹¹ God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God. ¹² Also to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.

Our trust should be in God. Our trust should be in him only. God has power and steadfast love. The love that the psalmist speaks of is that of covenant love. As God's people, we are to have an understanding of God's love that flows out of the covenant he had established with us. It is a love that is constant and dependable. Because of God's love, he will use His power in the best way. He will bring about justice (公义). He will reward us as he sees fit.

What is required in fathers? Faithfulness—that is faithfulness in providing, in disciplining, in guiding, and in comforting.

A father must do all these things in faithfulness, every day again. He certainly does not have an easy task, and he performs it in much weakness and failing. But every day we must recognize our heavenly Father in His perfect care for His children, for He has established a unique bond with us in Christ Jesus, a bond which He maintains by the power of the Spirit.

He keeps us with Himself, declares Himself personally responsible for us in His covenant, and proves this day by day, year after year. Let us never underestimate this Father. Let us never go against His Word. Do not be unmindful of the Apostles' Creed even though it is very familiar. There is very important truth universally accepted and taught here.

Begins “I believe in God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” AMEN.