



## WEEKLY STUDY

### Week 1

This week we began our summer series on the Apostles' Creed. This creed tells us the story of our faith and what parts of the story are most important – who God is and what God has done for us in Jesus. My prayer for us as we absorb and say these ancient words together as a church is that they will persist in shaping us and, as we read in Hebrews 10.23, help us to hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, believing that He who promised is indeed faithful to us.

With love,  
Pastor Angela

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional question at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

*O God, my Almighty Father, I believe in you. I believe in you, Jesus. I believe you are God's only son. I believe you were conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. I believe you suffered, were crucified, dead, and were buried. I believe you descended to the dead and rose again on the third day. I believe you ascended into heaven and are seated at the Father's right hand. I believe you will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in you, Holy Spirit. And in the Holy Catholic Church. I believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. Amen.*

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## DAILY STUDY

### MONDAY: JOHN 20.29-31

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." <sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- The creed begins by simply saying, I believe in God. But as Jacob shared, you can't force anyone to believe. They have to choose to believe for themselves. Some days we might wish we had the same privilege as the disciples. To see the miracles he performed first hand, or know every little thing He did while on this earth because those stories might hold the truth that will finally convince us or keep us from wandering. But the focus of the gospels is not to give us an exhaustive list of what Jesus did. Its focus is to give life! And blessed are you who have not seen and yet have believed!
- *God, I thank you for the faithfulness of those who took such care in telling stories about your son, Jesus, so that I can have life in His name. Give me courage to share my personal encounters of you with others so that life in Him is also possible for them.*

## **TUESDAY: ROMANS 10.9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. <sup>11</sup> "As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."*

- Jesus came to earth to save us, and raised from death to life to prove his great saving power. We don't need to ascend to the heavens to search for him, or descend below to try and save him. He has done the hard work and made a way for our hearts to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can believe and receive new life in Him! But new life is about more than just believing in your heart. We need to believe with our heart *and* confess with our mouth and then we will be saved. It's by belief *and* confession that we become His disciples and members of the Holy Church.
- *Jesus, my only hope, my Savior, thank you for enduring so much pain and suffering to save me. I know I can't save myself or fix this broken world. I've tried. I need you. Be at work in my heart. Redeem me.*

## **WEDNESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 12.9**

<sup>9</sup> *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

- Jacob shared the story of Adrian Alonzo, the uncle of Ellie Garcia, a 10 year old girl who was murdered in the Robb Elementary shooting. In an interview, Adrian offered forgiveness to the shooter and when asked how it was possible for him to do that, he said the Bible tells us that we must forgive each other. Adrian's faith and belief are powerful. But the kind of power he has belief in is counter-cultural. It's why you may have struggled with his response. We live in a world that demands retaliation. Violence for violence. But God's power is most perfectly revealed in weakness. If we really want to know what it means to say Almighty Father, we need to look to the cross. When we are tempted to act in a way that is not honoring God, we have to look to the cross. To Jesus. And remember that the One who could do all kinds of powerful and miraculous things, ushered in God's kingdom through His death on a cross. And through his weakness, God's power prevailed.
- *God, you are mighty. And in you I am mighty, not because of my strength, but because of yours. Help me to surrender myself to you. I want the world to know your loving power through me.*

## **THURSDAY: HEBREWS 6.18-20 MSG**

*We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go. It's an unbreakable spiritual lifeline, reaching past all appearances right to the very presence of*

*God where Jesus, running on ahead of us, has taken up his permanent post as high priest for us, in the order of Melchizedek.*

- Life is unquestioningly a roller coaster filled with distressing and uncertain moments. While none of us can control the shifts that are taking place around us, we can find stability by training our hearts and minds on what is real, solid, unwavering, and enduring. Our anchor of hope is solidly fixed within the inner sanctuary, where Jesus is. What do you need to let go of today so you can grab hold of Jesus? Do you trust that He will keep you steady and secure?
- *Jesus, help me to let go of anything that is keeping me from clinging to you and your promised hope today.*

#### **FRIDAY: JOHN 14.25-26, ACTS 2.1-4**

*<sup>25</sup>All of this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that departed and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

- This Sunday, we celebrated Pentecost. The day heaven and earth joined together through the promised Holy Spirit, which gave birth to the one true church of Jesus Christ to which we all belong.  
Being a follower of Jesus should not be a solo journey. God has not just called us to himself. God called us to be members of the worldwide community of believers that the Holy Spirit encourages, teaches, and empowers to share our beliefs and testify that Jesus is our Messiah and Lord. What steps can you take toward community today? How can you invite someone into your story? Or offer to pray in unity with someone God has put on your heart?
- *Holy Spirit, guide me this week. Remind me of truth and strengthen me where I am weak. Give me the courage I need to live out the vision and mission of Jesus' church.*

#### **SATURDAY: ROMANS 1.20**

*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 people are without excuse.*

- At some point, we all decide to believe or reject the idea that there is One whose power and creativity brought forth the cosmos. Paul believed that the universe points us to the existence of God. But we must acknowledge that we've been given the freedom of choice because God loves us. Scripture teaches us that God created us to find perfect wholeness as we live in a loving relationship with Him. And a loving relationship requires that the beloved (you!) is free to say no to the relationship if that's what you desire. It cannot be forced, or it is not loving. And God desires nothing less than your love. Unbelief, however, does not mean God will ever stop loving you or trying to communicate how very loved you are.
- *God, I pray today for those who struggle to believe in you. I pray you break into their world so evidently that they can no longer keep their back turned to you. May your love flood their life, in Jesus' name.*

## **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Pastor Jacob shared a story of a man he was meeting with who could not be convinced of the truth of the Bible and yet said, "I choose to believe."

- The New Testament is filled with stories of Jesus encouraging people to believe. Have you had moments in your life where you lacked clarity but chose to believe and cling to faith?
- Many deeply held beliefs have the power to motivate us to action, sacrifice, and service. Leaving aside the question of God for a moment, what are some of your most deeply held beliefs or convictions? How did you come to hold them? Can you trace their origins back?
- Are there any statements of belief from the Apostle's Creed you struggle with?
- If you are in doubt today, you can ask for your faith to be increased. If you're lacking a desire to follow Jesus, you can ask for steadfastness. If you don't want to go where you are being led, you can pray for God to soften your heart and give you a willing spirit. You can ask for what you need. What empowering do you need from the Holy Spirit today?