

Acts 3:11-16 (NIV)

¹¹While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

44-03-0-Our Trust in Christ's Victory

Apostles Creed, faith, Gospel, crucifixion, resurrection, testimony
Acts 3:11-16

The sufferings *of* Christ brought our victory *in* Christ.

INTRODUCTION:

–Our Scripture reading today told of a lame man healed in Jesus' name, and Peter used that occasion to tell the Gospel to the crowd who witnessed the healing. We get the same opportunity to explain our faith, whenever God's hand is seen in *answered prayer*, in nature's *beauty*, or in *God-incidences* (not *coincidences*), but when God does *miracles*. If we say, "*I believe God is behind that*," we can go on to tell what we believe about God and His plan for us. This is why it's crucial to know what we are confessing in the Apostle's Creed. Today we will explore: "*I believe . . . (Jesus) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead*." This phrase describes **Our Trust in Christ's Victory**. It's the heart of the Gospel, the "Good News" that **HOM.idea**.

I. Jesus Suffered under Pontius Pilate

- A. His name is in the Creed not just as a historical record, but because everyone knew that Pilate was against putting Jesus to death.
1. His wife warned, "Don't have anything to do with that **innocent man**, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." (**Mat 27:19b**)
 2. He knew Christ was innocent– **Luke 23:21b-22a**, "What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty."
 3. He made his opinion public– **Mat 27:24**, When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere,... he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"
- B. *So, why is his name in the Creed? It shows that Jesus suffers under individuals*– **Acts 9:4-5**, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?...I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." (He *suffers under* sinners till they become saints... Pilate's name could be replaced by Saul's or by ours.)

TRANS: Jesus suffered injustice willingly– **1 Pet 3:18a** (NKJV), For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Only the sacrifice of the innocent Lamb of God could "take away the sin of the world." **The sufferings of Christ brought our victory in Christ.**

II. Jesus Was Crucified, Dead, and Buried

- A. These 3 words denied Gnostic ideas about Jesus. [Gnostics taught that Jesus only appeared to be human, that He did not really die on the Cross, and that what appeared to be His body dissipated into thin air in the tomb.]
- B. But “*crucified, dead, and buried*” parallel 3 other words from the *original curse* upon Adam’s race: *tree, death, and earth*.
1. Sin’s curse came from a *tree*, and sin’s curse was defeated *on a tree*— Gal 3:13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”
 2. Sin brought us death, but by Christ’s *death* our life of sin is put to death— 1 Pet 2:24, He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. (His death became our victory over sin and death.)
 3. Sin turns us back to *earthly dust*; Christ’s *burial in an earthly tomb*, planted *the seed for the renewal of us and all creation!*

TRANS: “...*crucified, dead, buried*” ...*a tree, death, the earth*: Perfect parallels. But for His identification with humanity to be complete, Jesus went to where death took humanity— 1 Pet 3:18-19 (NKJV), For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison. The Creed records this part of the story....

III. Jesus Descended into Hell [*Hades*, “the abode of the dead”]

- A. Something very important happened when Jesus descended into Hades— [Jesus told the Apostle John] in Rev. 1:18, “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.” (Satan once held “the power of death”—now Jesus does.)
- B. Also, *during death*, He did what He’d done *in life*: He “preached.”
1. “*Does that mean people can repent after death?*” (We’re not told *directly*, but we have indirect clues in 1 Pet 4:6. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. (What that *fully* means, *I don’t know...*)
 2. But I do know what Rom 1:16 says “the gospel... is the power of God for the salvation of **everyone** who believes. Can the dead repent and become part of “everyone who believes” ? I don’t profess to know.)

TRANS: But I do confess: “*Jesus descended into Hell.*” He underwent

the whole human experience, from *birth to death to an out-of-body afterlife*. Perhaps He did tell those “spirits in prison,” “*Your sins are paid for... you will get your bodies back.*” It’s unknown, but we do know....

IV. The Third Day Jesus Rose Again from the Dead

- A. Christ’s *Incarnation* wasn’t just a temporary sojourn with us.
1. God intended *through His Son to share our human journey* for all eternity, and He sealed that intention by a *bodily resurrection*.
 2. The Incarnation is the most *human-friendly* concept there can be, and the Resurrection made *human-friendly realities permanent.*)
- B. The *Resurrection* didn’t just bring victory over death but validated everything Jesus had taught about Himself and about God’s will. (If He wasn’t raised from death, His word was falsehood; but if on “*the third day he rose again from the dead,*” as the Creed declares, then His word is truth and He is humanity’s only Savior).
- C. The *Resurrection* clearly identified Jesus with the 1st Adam.
1. Adam *came to life from the earth*, and Jesus—called by Scripture the 2nd Adam—*came to life from an earthly grave*.
 2. Jesus, the new Adam, is the **God-Man Savior** of the old race of Adam and **God-Man King** of a whole new race of humanity.

CONCLUSION:

—Jesus suffered injustice, a cruel death, and a 3-day trip to the gloom of Hades. That God in our human condition experienced those sufferings is, in itself, a victory for humanity. But an even greater victory is that this God-Man is alive in that same human flesh now and for eternity.

Easter Truths (DLH, 3/20/2018)

The Son of God became the Son of man
To bury sinful Adam’s ancient sway,
To orchestrate redemption’s master plan,
To birth a human race that could obey.
As one of us, He came from Mary’s womb.
As King of kings, He left an empty tomb.
As Life Eternal, He’s the only Way.

In Him, our hope is forever secure. This is our faith. This is our Creed.