

CREDO. I believe. Nothing about you matters more than what you believe. What you believe shapes your life. Either you know what you believe, or you don't. I can help you find out what you really believe.

We will explore belief in the weeks ahead. We will explore belief that harmonizes our little lives with what is truest about the universe we live in. People across vast periods of time in dramatically different cultures have believed what we will explore. Believing cost some of them their lives. Willingness to pay a price is what it means to believe in something or someone.

We are living in the last days. That means we live in times when Jesus is patiently exerting His authority to govern the nations, and His authority is being contested in every way imaginable. We should not be surprised when Christ and the Church come under attack from within and from without. Behind this spiritual warfare are opposing beliefs.

### **The Creed of the World**

I want you to hear 18 beliefs that fuel this spiritual warfare. I believe that:

1. Science has disproved Christianity.
2. Christianity is a form of wish fulfillment.
3. Death is the end of me.
4. People with strong beliefs just want to control other people.
5. Religious education is a form of child abuse.
6. Christians are hypocrites.
7. It's okay to bash Christianity but not other religions.
8. Science has nothing to do with morality.
9. It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere.
10. Feeling good matters more than doing good. If it feels good, do it.
11. What consenting adults do behind closed doors is no one else's business.
12. Science will conquer nature and bring in Utopia.
13. I believe in the authority of TV and the Internet.
14. Thou shalt covet, thou shalt buy, thou shalt consume, and thou shalt do it over and over, or the economy will collapse.
15. I deserve what I have, if what I have is good.
16. I don't deserve what I have, if what I have is bad.
17. My problems would be over if I won the lottery.
18. If you have your health, you have everything.

Every item in the secular creed takes something true and distorts it. Health matters, but if you make health the most important part of life, you begin to be very unhealthy. What consenting adults do behind closed doors is private. But to say it is only private begins to unravel the moral fabric of a community. Science has enormous explanatory power, but trying to disprove God by using science is bad science.

Something else strikes me about a secular creed. The secular creed bombards us everyday in clever ways through television, the Internet, movies, politics, and peer pressure. It's a wonder that people can resist it, and none of us completely resists it. Yet millions of Christians push back against secular beliefs with deeply held Christian beliefs. Among all God's people down through the ages, the following beliefs enable us to resist the dogmatic secular beliefs of our age.

### **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
Born of the Virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, dead, and buried.  
The third day, he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
And sat down at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The Holy Catholic Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.

This battle of beliefs will inform many moments we are together in the weeks ahead. I promise not to be argumentative. I promise not to belittle people I disagree with. I promise to say what you don't expect me to say. Above all, I promise to allow God and not what I say about God to be the mystery and meaning of our moments together.

Here are first steps you can take to fight the good fight of faith.

A. Identify one statement in A Secular Creed that has the strongest appeal to you.  
You need to know yourself that well.

B. Talk about it with a friend or your small group. We fight the good fight of faith best as part of a team.

C. What could you do to challenge its appeal to you? This is where a friend or small group really helps. They see things you miss, and they can hold you accountable.

### **At the Lord's Table**

Worship always precedes understanding. Creeds at their best lead us into awe and wonder before the mystery of God. Nowhere are awe and wonder more fitting than here around the Lord's Supper.

Here we receive bread and wine as material ways by which we hold communion with the Crucified One, who trampled over death by death.