

'LENT
for OUR
EVERYDAY'

Spending time in the Creeds

Week 4

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Crucified, Dead and Buried

Interestingly, the gospels give over a disproportionate amount of space to the last weeks of Jesus' ministry on earth. John's gospel uses 10 of the 21 chapters to the final few days; arguably for good reason.

The Apostle's Creed tells us that Jesus:
'suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. He descended to the dead. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty.'

In the actions of these events Jesus 'banishes' the three shadows cast over humanity; sin, death, and futility.

As Paul noted to the believers in Corinth, some 20 years after the events of Jesus' ministry, His death was for 'our sins' in accordance with the scriptures - Jesus was not just another rebel Jew put to death by the powerful and the elite of society.

When a deep offence is committed then justice has to be enacted. The human race turned from God, wounding each other, the creation we are supposed to care for, and rejecting the image of God born by every human being. Jesus dies *as one of us*; fully human. As a representative of humanity *he dies on our behalf*— as it were bearing our sins on his shoulders.

Crucified, Risen and Ascended

Something happened after Jesus' burial that no one expected; not even those who went to attend to his corpse. First century Jews believed in a resurrection, a general resurrection of all at the end of time; but no one expected it within the middle of history! Yet, we are told by witnesses to everything, that 3 days after his burial Jesus is raised. How, the exact science is not known. How, by the power of 'innocence'; it is the why that makes things happen. For the wages of sin are death, and Jesus was without sin, ergo Jesus can't remain

dead. However, this is not simply resuscitation but resurrection. Having passed through death Jesus is raised to a new life, to an eternal resurrection life.

The Creeds tell us, he 'sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty'. His final destination is not death but intimate fellowship with the Father, over all things for all times.

As Paul reminds his readers again and again, our story, by faith is caught up into all of this. For by faith we receive God's grace, whilst we were dead in our sins, God in Christ came to us to atone for our sins and raise us to be where he is. Here is 'good news', here is the Gospel—no wonder then that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John use as much ink as they do talking of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; with us and for us!

Moving on, going deeper!

Reflect this week on:

Which of the three 'shadows' is cast most evidently over our society today — sin, death or futility?

How might we know the life of the resurrection here and now?

The New Testament uses various images to talk of the meaning of the cross; a 'ransom paid', an 'acquittal pronounced' a 'reconciliation between enemies'. Which image do you find the most helpful and why?

The Week ahead.

You might like to pray each day:

May I be open to your grace come down to us in Christ and know the forgiveness of my sins. May I be open to the presence of your resurrection life at work in me through your Spirit. This I ask loving Father of all, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

