
Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.

Text highlighted in this way will have a slide prepared to be on screen.



Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the reality of sin and God's forgiveness.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because recognizing when we miss the mark and seeking God's forgiveness is essential to the Christian life.

What is the good news?

The good news is that God is ready to forgive you, no matter the circumstances.

What are the next action steps?

Recognize sin in your life.

Know that Jesus came to save you from your sin.

Know that Jesus lived, died and rose again to forgive you and offer you grace.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon is part of a series focused on the Apostles' Creed. It is based on the book *Creed: What Christians Believe and Why* by Adam Hamilton and a series of sermons preached at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in 2015 - <http://cor.org/leawood/sermon-series/searching-for-truth>

Metadata

Topics

- Change Lives
- Make Disciples

Passion / Palm / 6th Sunday in Lent (Purple)
Believe - Exploring the Apostles' Creed -
The Forgiveness of Sins
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

April 9, 2017
Mark 2:3-12
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,197

Sermon Books of the Bible

- Galatians
- Mark
- Matthew
- Micah
- Romans

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, Lent, 40Days, Believe, ApostlesCreed, forgiveness, grace, sin

Sermon Audio

9 a.m. Worship

11 a.m. Worship

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Invitation

The Apostles' Creed

Introduction

Mark 2:3-12, CEB

³Some people arrived, and four of them were bringing to him a man who was paralyzed. ⁴They couldn't carry him through the crowd, so they tore off part of the roof above where Jesus was. When they had made an opening, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven!"

⁶Some legal experts were sitting there, muttering among themselves, ⁷"Why does he speak this way? He's insulting God. Only the one God can forgive sins."

⁸Jesus immediately recognized what they were discussing, and he said to them, "Why do you fill your minds with these questions? ⁹Which is easier—to say to a paralyzed person, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your bed, and walk'? ¹⁰But so you will know that the Human One has authority on the earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed, ¹¹"Get up, take your mat, and go home."

¹²Jesus raised him up, and right away he picked up his mat and walked out in front of everybody. They were all amazed and praised God, saying, "We've never seen anything like this!"

Mark 2:3-12, NRSV

³Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."

¹²And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.



Spring Rain

I love spring, especially the rain. When you step outside on a day like today, everything seems fresh and clean. The smell in the air, the deep green of grass and trees. The world is beginning again.

This process of being made new is part of our life as Christians, as well, particularly in the sacrament of baptism where the primary symbol is water and the focus is on the gift of the new life.

Believe Worship Series

During this series we are taking a closer look at essential Christian beliefs and the words of the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is an ancient Christian statement of faith whose words or ideas come from the scriptures.

Apostles' Creed as Tool for Baptism

The Apostles' Creed was created in the early church as a way of helping people understand the faith before they were baptized. There were some children who were baptized in the first and second century, however the majority of people who were coming to faith were pagan. Before they were baptized, they were to memorize these words, this statement of faith.

Today's Phrase of the Apostles' Creed

Today, we consider the words of the creed: I believe in the forgiveness of sin and focus on two main points - we need forgiveness and God forgives.

Transition

We begin with our need for forgiveness.

Pause

We Need Forgiveness

To say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." means that you have to understand the idea of sin. You have to know that something is wrong and that forgiveness is the answer.

The Human Condition

The truth about who we are as human beings is that we are going to fail.
We are going to make mistakes.
We are going to hurt people.
We are going to do things that aren't right.
We call these things sin.

This is a part of who we are as human beings.
Sin break down relationships with God and with each other.
Sin creates pain in our world.

Pause

Etymology of Sin

Miss the Mark

To understand sin a little bit more, it can be helpful to understand the New Testament concept of sin. The word in the Greek New Testament translated as sin is *hamartia*.

hamartia means to miss the mark

God's Dream for Our Lives

Of course, if sin means to miss the mark, it implies that there is a mark.
There is a way that we're supposed to live as human beings – to be authentically human, created in God's image and who God made us to be, we would live this way.
Then what we find is we veer off the path sometimes.
We miss the mark.
Sometimes, we miss it by little small degrees, and sometimes, we run from the mark and we go in the opposite direction.

We all know this. It is something we have all experienced.

Adam and Eve

Created in Paradise

It goes back to the very beginning of our story as humans - the story of Adam and Eve. You remember that Adam and Eve are created in the middle of a beautiful garden. There is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and everything else that's wonderful and beautiful in paradise.

God's Guidance

God says, "You can have it all. Just this one tree is mine, so just please don't eat from that one, but anything else, you can have." Of course, what becomes the one tree they most desperately want to eat from?

Temptation

Then there's the serpent who whispers to them, "Hey, God didn't really mean that. Why don't you go ahead and try it. You're going to love it."

Paradise Lost

In the end, they pluck the forbidden fruit and paradise is lost.
This is our story.

Pause

Missing and Making the Mark

This story describes who we are as human beings.
We struggle to do the right thing.
We find ourselves drawn to doing the wrong thing.

Yet not all the time.
We do a lot of good things, because we were made in God's image.
We can see the mark.
We kind of have the feeling inside of what the mark is.
We get it right a lot of times, but we also get it wrong.

Pause

Missing the Mark

History

In case you think, 'Well, yeah, but not me. I'm not really that bad. I'm a pretty good person.' The church has laid out, over time, different ways to talk about some of the ways that we struggle with sin. One of those is a list called 'The Seven Deadly Sins.'

Significance

This list was really created in order to help people see themselves – sort of like a mirror held up to your soul. They are called 'deadly sins' because they are sins that lead to a lot of other things and also, when they are lived out create pain and death.

Seven Deadly Sins

Here they are:

lust
gluttony
greed
sloth
anger
envy
pride

Invitation to Reflection

As you look at these, are there any of them that you struggle with?

Deep in your heart, in the way you act, and the desires that you have.

You know, I look at this list and there's at least three or four of them that I think, 'I struggle with that. I regularly find myself wrestling with this one, or that one.'

There's a few of them that I don't think I wrestle with, but probably those might be the ones I most wrestle with, I'm just blind to it.

Pause

Making the Mark

Guidance from Scripture

Now, our faith doesn't just lay out for us, 'Here's what's bad and what that looks like, and see if you can find yourself in the list.' The Bible also lays out for us what's good. It shares with us, 'Here's the mark that you're supposed to target.'

Key Scripture: Micah 6:8

For example, from Micah 6:8:

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."¹

Key Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39

Or Jesus' words in Matthew 22:37-39 when he gives the greatest commandment:

"He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.

This is the first and greatest commandment.

¹ Micah 6:8, NIV.

And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.”²

Key Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23

Or consider Paul’s words in Galatians where he lays out the fruit of the Spirit
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this.”³

This is evidence that you are walking on God’s path, that the Spirit is working in you.

Invitation to Reflection

Now, when you consider this list, how well are you measuring up in each of these? Would you give yourself an 'A,' or a 'B,' or a 'C,' on any given one of these?

Pause

When I look at the list, I think there's three or four that I feel like, 'Okay, I'm kind of getting there. I feel like I might have a 'B' in that one; and there's several of them that I think I've got a D- in.'

It depends on the week, sometimes those change.

Life in the Spirit

What would a marriage look like if two people were both living this way?
What would it be like to live in a community where people practiced these things?
What would happen if every nation acted in this way towards other nations?
Or, a leader towards his or her own people?

Pause

Key Scripture: Romans 7:19

If we lived according to the mark that God has laid out for us...

Yet, we find ourselves like the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:19:

“I don’t do the good that I want to do, but I do the evil that I don’t want to do.”⁴

Recognition of Sin

When you can finally say, "I realize I'm a sinner. I stray from the mark that God has for my life." When you finally say that, you begin the journey towards healing and forgiveness.

Pause

² Matthew 22:37-39, CEB.

³ Galatians 5:22-23, CEB.

⁴ Romans 7:19, CEB.

God Forgives

When we believe in the forgiveness of sins, we believe that we are in need of forgiveness. We also believe that God has chosen to forgive us.

Through Jesus

God's forgiveness comes to us in Jesus Christ – whose name in Hebrew means 'God Saves.'

Communion

We remember that at the last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples, he took bread. He gave thanks to God. He blessed it and broke it.

He turns to his disciples and says, "This is my body which is given for you."

He takes the cup and he says, "This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many," and for what? The forgiveness of sins.

Jesus came to save sinners.

This is what he does throughout his ministry.

Stretcher Bearers

We find this in the story from Mark.

Jesus Teaching

There was a man who was paralyzed in a certain town. Jesus came to town, and he's teaching inside a house. There's a huge crowd of people, a throng of people in the house, and crammed outside the doors of the house, and by the windows.

Stretcher Bearers

This man who was paralyzed, his four friends come and they pick up his stretcher. We call them 'stretcher bearers' around here, people who carry you when you can't carry yourself. They picked him up and they took him to Jesus, but they couldn't get into the house.

Tear through the Roof

They hoisted him up onto the roof top and then they tear off the roof panels, and they lower him gently in front of Jesus. They're determined to get this paralyzed man healed, touched by Jesus. Jesus does a strange thing. First of all, he looks up, and because the faith of this man's friends, he decides to do something.

Your Sins are Forgiven

He looks at the man and he says, "Your sins are forgiven."

Desire to Walk

"Your sins are forgiven? This man can't walk, Jesus. That's why he's here. Don't you know, that's why we peeled off the roof. We carried him here because he can't walk. We don't care about his sins. Make him walk again."

Only God Can Forgive

Then, they began to grumble, "Well, what kind of man forgives sins? Only God can do that," which is sort of the point of the text.

Only God can do that.

Who is Jesus?

Pick Up Mat and Walk

Jesus says, "In order that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, take up your mat and walk." The man picked up his mat, and he walked out.

This is the power of forgiveness.

It's the power of grace.

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that God is ready to forgive you, no matter the circumstances.

Call to Action

Aware of Sin

I want to ask you:

Do you know there's something wrong?

Do you understand that you're a sinner?

That doesn't mean that you're a horrible person. It just means that you stray from the path, and that you need God's grace. Do you understand that?

Aware of God's Grace

Do you understand that Jesus came to save you from your sin?

Do you know that Jesus lived, died and was raised again to forgive you and offer you grace?

There is nothing you could have done that God is not willing to forgive when you ask for his mercy and grace.

Nothing.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

Invitation

Will you please stand, as you are able, and say the Apostles' Creed with me?

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
from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,

and sitteth at the
right hand of
God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come
to judge the quick 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.