

Statement of Faith for Mitchell Trigger

I believe in God as the creator of all things, the redeemer of humanity through Jesus Christ, and a continuing presence and strength in the Holy Spirit.

Yet I also realize that my personal faith is different from every other Christian's because each one of us has had a different experience of God in our lives. Each one of us is a combination of what we've been taught by our faith communities, what we've experienced as God at work in the world, the faith stories we've learned from others, and most importantly, how we view the Bible.

My faith is best explained by sharing my view of the atonement, the work of Jesus Christ to reconcile humanity to God. From the beginning of our relationship with God, human beings have had the choice to believe or not to believe in God, and then to choose or not to choose to follow the path of life that God created us for. Our fears have caused us to rebel and turn away from God. Like the parable of the prodigal son, even when we realize what God has blessed us with, we fear that God is waiting to punish us for our rebellion.

Yet in Christ we have experienced something else. Jesus refused to turn from the path of God and human beings killed him. Still, on the cross Jesus asked for God to forgive us and God did. It's as if God has said to us, "You have done the worst thing imaginable, put my Son (a blameless one) to death and still I forgive you. Do you doubt that there is anything that I can forgive you for? Do you still doubt that I love you just as you are?" On top of that, God gave us the gift of resurrection, removing the fear of death and separation that is a human being's greatest fear. By raising Jesus from the dead, God has assured us that death is not the final word and that we need not fear eternal separation from the ones we love the most. There can be no greater gift than that.

My faith is guided by the need to respond to that gift by emulating (as much as possible) the way of Jesus, always working on forgiving and living without judgment, helping those in need, and remembering to see each person as my neighbor, made in the image of God just as I am.

In the midst of living out the teachings of Jesus, I believe we are to remember the simple words, "Be not afraid." No matter how great the obstacles or how painful the experiences of life may be, I believe God walks with us. This does not protect us from harm, but gives us strength to endure until we are at last fully reconciled with God.