

“Holy Spirit”
Apostles Creed
Various
08/13/2023

Introduction

Tim. Pastor. **John 14.**

We are turning the corner today into section 3 of the Creed. If you remember...

- Section 1 – God the Father – almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- Section 2 – God the Son – person + work of Jesus

And now we’ll spend the final 4 weeks looking at **God the Holy Spirit** and the work that He does in the church and in the age to come.

We’ll start by looking today at this line in the creed – **“I believe in the Holy Spirit.”**

If you would, let’s stand and read the Creed together, I’ll pray, and then we’ll get into it.

THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated 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.

Pray.

“Slides”. Summer 2023 has been the summer of pools and water for the Olson household. It has been extremely hot (that’s not a statement on climate change, it’s just a reality ok?) and our 3 year old Harper is in swim lessons so it’s the perfect combination that means any time we can get to a pool, we’re getting to a pool.

A few weeks ago Harper and I went to the pool down at the Harris YMCA, over in Southpark, and we were having a blast. She likes to jump in, I catch her, lift her back out. She jumps back in, I catch her, lift her back out. Again, and again, and again, and again, and again. Until finally I was like, “we have to do something else.” So I suggested to her the water slides. “Hey Harper, look at those really fun water slides, do you want to go on those?”

Now some important context, if you were here last week and heard my rambling about being a scared child, well let’s just say the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. Like her dad, Harper is very hesitant. And so I knew exactly how she was going to respond, because she always responds the same way. The first question she asks when you suggest something that feels a bit scary to her, or is daunting, or is new is this.

She always asks the same thing – **“Can you come with me?”**

And this is true in lots of areas of her life:

- Soccer – she needed to know when she goes on the field “Can you come with me?”

- Pre-school – the first couple of times we dropped her off “Can you come with me?”
- Grocery store – Harper, do you want to come with to get some groceries for momma? “Can you come with me?”
Yes of course, you cannot drive our van.

She wants to know – **when I walk into this, when I try this new thing, when I step into whatever this is, will you be with me?**

Now what does that have to do with the Holy Spirit?

What I hope you’ll see during our time together this morning is **everything**. That has everything to do with the Holy Spirit.

Because the question Harper asks of me, her earthly father, is the same question we all tend to ask or at least wonder about our heavenly father, is it not?

Do you ever find yourself asking that question – Is God with me? When I go through suffering? When I go through trial? When I face temptation? When I feel like everything around me is crumbling? When I feel alone? When I’m anxious, when I’m afraid – Is God with me?

***That’s a question that sticks on many of our minds.
And that’s the question on the minds of the disciples in John 14.***

This text we’re going to look at today comes right at the end of what Christians call “The Last Supper”. This is the night Jesus is going to be betrayed and handed over to be crucified on the cross. He washed His disciples’ feet, instituted the sacrament of communion. And then right before our section in verse 15 he told them – I’m about to leave and you can’t come with me.

And you have to remember – **this is not on the disciples radar**. Up until this point their understanding was that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the one who was supposed to reign on the throne of David, conquer their enemies (the Romans), establish the kingdom of Israel forever – and now he’s talking about “I’m going to leave you and it’s going to get really hard for you and where I go you can’t go with right now.”

And so of course they’re asking these questions – Wait what? You’re leaving? I thought you were going to establish a kingdom? Where are you going? I thought you said you were going to be with us forever?

And the resounding answer from Christ to his disciples to calm their hearts is this promise, the same promise He makes now to all of us who trust in Him – **YES. I am with you always...but not necessarily how you expect.**

John 14:15-18, 25-27

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

25 “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

What I want us to understand in the deep places of our soul, is that when we confess together “I believe in the Holy Spirit” we’re not simply saying that the Holy Spirit exists. We’re not solely saying that the Holy Spirit brings gifts to the church like leadership, serving, generosity, tongues, healing, prophecy. Though all of that is true.

What we are confessing, as we join our voices to the people of God throughout history and across the globe is this:

The Holy Spirit is the resounding yes throughout time to God’s people asking – “Will God be with me?”

In these 7 verses, we find these four crucial truths I want to spend our time exploring and being encouraged by together:

- **God is with us in suffering.**
- **God is with us in temptation.**
- **God is with us in the Church.**
- **God is with us to the end.**

God is with us in suffering

Look at v16 – **16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.**

When Jesus tells his disciples he’s sending the Holy Spirit, He refers to the Spirit as the **Helper**.

Now the Greek word there, which is used in several other places for the Holy Spirit in the NT as well, is the word **parakletos**. And one of the predominant ways that it can be translated is that of **consoler or comforter**. Some of your translations might read “give you another *counselor*, to be with you forever.”

Suffering has a unique way of making us feel alone, does it not? There’s something isolating about suffering. Even when we try to bring others into it, we try to walk out our suffering faithfully in community, even when others are there for us in every way we would ask, it can help mitigate those feelings, but we can still feel lonely, can we not?

And not just in our horizontal relationships with others, but also in our vertical relationship with God. We can start to wonder – is God hearing my prayers? Is God present to me? Does God care? It feels like in my pain I’m just sort of talking to the ceiling.

And Jesus tells us in those feelings of loneliness and isolation, in the midst of our suffering, you have a great counselor, a great helper, God the Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father and by the Son to be our comforter in times of suffering and sorrow.

But here’s what is crazy – He’s not just **with us** in our suffering, He’s **in us** in our suffering.

Look at v17 – **17 You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**

This is pointing forward to Accts 2, the day of pentecost, where the Holy Spirit is sent by God the Father and God the Son to live in, to indwell all who trust in Jesus. That from Acts 2 onward, even to today, if you believe in Jesus, God the Holy Spirit lives in you.

This is what Jesus is promising – I’m leaving, and you’re going to suffer, and it’s going to get difficult. But let not your hearts be troubled – God the Holy Spirit will come and live in you.

This would have absolutely floored the disciples, to hear that God Himself was going to dwell in them. Shocking, because of how God’s presence was up until that point.

Just zoom out for a second with me. Go way back to Genesis 1 and 2. Adam and Eve walk with God, experiencing his unmediated presence in the Garden of Eden. But even still they rebel, they disobey and sin enters the world. And they are cast out of the garden, sent east of Eden. But they are not just sent out of paradise, they're sent out of the presence of God.

And the journey of humanity from there on was the journey back to but inability to be fully in God's presence. There's a separation in the Old Testament (Dan explored this a few weeks ago), where only one man, the high priest, could enter into the Holy of Holies, the part of the temple where God's presence dwelt and lived. And even then only once a year after incredible amounts of purification rituals and routines, lest he be struck down and die. God's presence, separated from His people by a veil.

Until Jesus dies, and what happens? The veil is torn in two. And now, Jesus says, this God whose presence you needed mediated, whose presence was always a bit separated because of your unrighteousness, now through the righteousness of Jesus is coming to live inside of you to be your Helper and Comforter. If you trust in Christ, the Holy Spirit, God Himself, lives inside of you.

So when you suffer, it's not just that yes, God is with you. He's in you! Which means though God may feel distant, He's actually closer to you than you could ever imagine.

- He's closer to you, in the words of St. Augustine, then you are to yourself.
- He's more aware of the depth of your pain than you are able to process in your limited human emotions.
- He knows your prayers before you can even formulate the words.
- He, in the Holy Spirit, knows your prayers that aren't even words, but just simply groaning and sorrow.

And He offers you, in His indwelling presence – **Peace**.

This is what Jesus says in **verse 26...**

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

In this world you will have trouble, but your hearts don't have to be troubled. Because I'm sending you peace. But not peace as a feeling, not peace as a state of mind, not peace as an absence of trouble or worry – peace in a person. The Person of God the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

Lindsay. I've seen this up close and personal over the past few weeks. As we've walked through our suffering and grief over the past month and a half, one of the consistent lines I have heard Lindsay say to me and to others is that quote "It feels like I'm being held together by God." And as we were in TT this week she said – "I guess maybe I should start saying "I'm being held together by the Holy Spirit."

Will God be with us in our suffering? Yes. But even better – he'll be within us, pointing us to Christ, pointing us to what is true. Working in our hearts.

God is with us in temptation

Look back at v16... **16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth...**

So the Holy Spirit is the great paraklete – helper, counselor. But the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of truth.

One of the consistent refrains in the Scriptures is that God is the God of truth. God's Word is called the "Word of Truth". Jesus calls himself the Truth in John 14:6. And now here the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of truth.

What does this have to do with temptation?

The Holy Spirit being the Spirit of truth is meant to be placed in contrast to the enemy of God and His people, what the Scriptures call the devil. (If you're like - the devil and the Holy Spirit in one sermon, this is great! I KNOW!!)

We've said this before, the primary way the devil works to derail the people of God is not through your car breaking down or giving you food poisoning. He works through lies. Through deceit.

The Spirit is of truth, and the devil is a liar. Jesus says, **John 8:44 – When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

But the Devil's goal in his lying is not just to get you to believe stupid things. Ah man, I hope I can deceive Tim into thinking the earth is flat. That'll get him.

No. The goal of his lies is to deceive you into disbelieving the goodness and kindness of God, such that you would live in a way contrary to God's design.

- Do you really think God would want you to forgive that person who was mean to you? Wouldn't that be harmful to you?
- Do you really think God is gonna take care of you at work and in your career or do you need to cut some corners and neglect your family so you can 'handle it yourself'?
- Do you really think God is the same yesterday, today, and forever or do you need to lose sleep worrying about your future?

In the words of one early Christian theologian – "Every sin starts with a lie about God."

So Jesus says I'm leaving, but I'm sending the Holy Spirit to live inside of all who trust in me and one of his primary roles is to reorient and ground God's people in truth, in the reality of God such that they choose holiness, not sin. Such that they are sanctified, not rebellious. Such that they do not give into temptation when they face it – because church do we not face it on a daily basis? On an hourly basis? – but that we would know God is with us and in us when we face it so we can have a way out and grow to be more like Jesus.

How does the Holy Spirit do this? Skip down to **John 16**, Jesus tells us...

8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit helps us fight temptation in 2 ways:

First, he convicts us of sin. He shows us the truth that what God says is contrary to His design, is in fact contrary to his design.

And He does this primarily through the Word of God. That's how he guides us into all truth. How do we know what is true? What has God told us in the Scriptures? The Spirit wrote the Scriptures (1 Peter 1:21), the Spirit still speaks to us today through the Scriptures (Heb 4:12), and the Spirit will bring back to memory the Scriptures when we need them.

Norah. "The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." (Ex 34).

That's why it's so important to read God's Word, memorize God's Word. Not just for what it offers in the moment, but for what the Holy Spirit can do with it later on to convict us of sin.

Second, he points us to the glory of Jesus. He will glorify me, Jesus says. The Spirit will make much of Jesus continually in our hearts. Because "that is bad" is not enough for long-term holiness. To be able to consistently say no to sin, we must delight ourselves in something better.

We must fill the gnawing of our hearts, the longings of our soul, that make the deceptive lies of the devil appealing and tempting in the first place, we must find their deepest satisfaction in the glory and sufficiency of Christ! And that's what the Holy Spirit helps do. He makes much of Jesus!

Will God be with me when I suffer? Yes. He lives within us as our peace.

Will God be with me when I face temptation? Yes. He lives within us to convict us of what is wrong and magnify the beauty and glory of Christ such that we are satisfied in Him.

God is with us in the Church

We'll go much more in depth on the Church next week since it's the next line of the creed but one thing I want you to notice quickly is in verse 17...

You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

He dwells with you. Now when Jesus is saying that, what he means is not simply that the Holy Spirit will dwell with us and in us individually, BUT ALSO that He will come and dwell with us and in us collectively. So the Spirit dwells in each individual believer, each person who trusts in and follows Jesus. AND ALSO dwells in the collective group of Jesus followers, i.e. **the Church**.

This is seen elsewhere in Scripture:

- **Eph 2:22 – In [Christ] you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**
- **Matt 18:20 – For where two or three are gathered in my name** (in context he's talking about the Church), **there am I among them.**

What's the point – that means what we do here when we gather together as the people of God. That's what the church is. The Church, or in the NT Greek - *Ekklesia* – is the gathered together people of God. This is not mundane or ordinary in any stretch of the imagination.

Now what we do is ordinary. It's rhythmic, it's routine – we welcome each other, we worship through song, we confess our sins and remember the gospel, we hear God's Word read and preached, and we respond through singing, communion and prayer before we're sent back into the world.

On the one hand it's extremely normal and ordinary. On the other hand it's extremely not.

Because – God the Holy Spirit is here with us when we gather. God the Holy Spirit is here with us when we sing. God the Holy Spirit is here with us when we take communion. God the Holy Spirit is here with us when we pray for one another. God the Holy Spirit is here with us when we open up God’s Word.

So listen – God is here with us right now in a unique and special way. He’s always with us as the people of God. He’s with you in your personal times of prayer and Bible reading. He’s with you when you get coffee with another believer to pray for one another and encourage one another. He’s with you in your Community Group time, absolutely when you confess sin, open up the Scriptures, encourage one another, rebuke and confront one another.

But there’s something unique and extra-ordinary, according to the Scriptures about this time and this space and the way God interacts with us here when we gather together as the Church.

That’s why I’m fully convinced, with my whole heart, that every single time we gather God can do the miraculous. I’m expecting every time I show up here on Sunday to hear from the living God and encounter the Holy Spirit.

Do you have that expectation when you come into the Gathering? Do you have that eagerness when you come into the Gathering?

Is this “check the box”, sing some words, listen to the message and hope I learn something new, then head home. Or is this – encountering the presence of the Holy Spirit who is here to meet with me and change me, mold me, encourage me, convict me, and send me out of this room and into the world CHANGED.

We need hearts that believe this. Eyes that look for this. Whole beings that are ready to receive. Which is why you might occasionally hear one of our leaders pray “Come Holy Spirit.” Not because the Holy Spirit isn’t already here, but we are asking that He would help us be more aware of His presence and work in this place and in our lives when we gather.

God is with us when we suffer.
God is with us in temptation.
God is with us in the Church.

God is with us to the end

17 You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Verse 18 – “I will not leave you as orphans” – is the promise that everything that is currently true – God with us in suffering, with us in temptation, with us in the Church – will be true until Christ returns or calls us home to be with Him.

We will not be left on our own. Jesus has not left us as orphans. We have been brought into the family of God. We have the guarantee, because of the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us, that we will be a part of God’s family forever.

I was reading about that this week in my time with the Lord. Some folks in our CG are reading through Romans together, and this week I came to **Rom 8:23 – And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

We have the firstfruits of the Spirit. A firstfruit is the first crop in the harvest that shows more crops are going to come. But because we’re not farmers – it’s the initial deposit. It’s the money you put down that means the house is yours. That’s who the Holy Spirit is for us. That’s what we have. He’s been given to us as the firstfruits.

Meaning – we get a taste of everything offered to us in the Holy Spirit right now, but one day everything the Spirit offers will be in full.

So we get glimpses of peace right now, moments of peace right now. Little moments where in our suffering God breaks through and comforts us in the Holy Spirit. But a day is coming where we will be in the new creation. A place not of peace in suffering, but peace without suffering. Total and forever perfection, righteousness, joy.

The peace we get now from the Holy Spirit, little glimpses in our everyday life, is the firstfruit that more peace is coming.

We get help now in our temptation. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, helps us delight more in Christ. But a day is coming where that delight will be full. Where we will see Christ, not in a mirror dimly lit but in fullness. There will be no more sin, no more temptation. I mean can you imagine a life where you don't have to fight to block out lustful thoughts? Can you imagine a life where you don't have to work not to gossip anymore? Not that just sin won't be around, but temptation itself won't even be around.

And right now, every victory over temptation we experience by the power of the Holy Spirit is the firstfruit that total and complete victory is coming.

As we gather together with God's people, the Church, He meets us. He works in our hearts as we worship Him, as we celebrate and feast at the table of communion, as we open up His Word. But then 10:45 rolls around and we go home. We leave each other's presence. But a day is coming where that worship will not end. Where forever we will be with God and His people feasting at the marriage supper of the lamb, worshipping Him with the angels, celebrating the King.

And right now, every Sunday Gathering we experience by the power of the Holy Spirit the firstfruit of this forever worship we will one day enjoy with God and His people.

So not only will God be with me in my suffering. And not only will God be with me in temptation. Not only will He be with me when I gather with God's people...But that will be true as he calls me His own forever.

ALL of that – guaranteed by, sealed by, promised through the Holy Spirit who lives inside of me, and inside of you, and inside of all who trust in Christ. He will not leave us as orphans.

Conclusion

Do you see now how beautiful this line we confess is?

I believe in the Holy Spirit! I believe God now lives in me, His presence is always with me, comforting me in my grief and sorrow, sanctifying and maturing me by convicting me of sin, glorifying Jesus and shaping and growing my affections for Him, molding me as I worship with His people, bringing me into His family, and guaranteeing all of that until Christ returns or brings me home to be with Him.

What a line! What a glorious worshipful reality. May the Spirit grow in our hearts and lives.

And may we, as the Scriptures tell us – learn more and more to keep in step with Him.

Let's pray.