

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Thus concludes the Apostle's Creed. Today and tomorrow, we're looking at the first phrase, we believe in the Holy Spirit.

Like the other topics we have covered while looking at the Apostle's Creed, we are just going to scratch the surface. Theologians have written thousands upon thousands of pages on the Holy Spirit and who he is and what he does. We cannot begin to delve into the depths of all that can be known about the Spirit in the short time we have together, but I want to give you an overview which can be the starting point for further study.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Simply put, the Bible declares that the Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, a being with a mind, emotions, and a will, who is equal to God the Father and God the Son in every way.

The Holy Spirit possesses all the characteristics of God. For example, his eternal being is shown in Genesis chapter 1:1-2: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

In Psalm 139:7-8 we see his omnipresence, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."

In 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, we see that the Holy Spirit is all-knowing. "These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."

We can know that the Holy Spirit is indeed a divine person because He possesses a mind, emotions, and a will. The Holy Spirit thinks and knows (1 Corinthians 2:10). The Holy Spirit feels grief (Ephesians 4:30). The Spirit intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27). He makes decisions according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity. As God, the Holy Spirit can truly function as the Comforter and Counselor that Jesus promised He would be (John 14:16, 26; 15:26).

Now that we've talked briefly about who the Holy Spirit is, let's talk about what the Spirit does.

The Spirit dwells inside every Christian. The body of a Christian becomes his temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

The Spirit works in the believer's life in many ways. Let's look at 9 of them.

1. The Holy Spirit is an advocate who teaches and reminds us of what Jesus said and did.

In John 14:26, Jesus told his disciples, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

The word Advocate comes from the Greek word "Parakletos." It is a legal term that means someone who comes along side to advocate for you, much like a lawyer would today. It also has several other meanings depending on the context of where it is used. Thus it is translated into different words in different Bibles. Depending on which translation you are reading, the word Parakletos can be translated as "Helper" or "Advocate", or "Counselor"

The Holy Spirit provides wise counsel to Christ's followers. Jesus knew he would be going away and that his followers would need the Holy Spirit as a helper and an advocate to remind them of his teachings. This is why we believe the gospel accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection are true, because we believe they were written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit convicts the people of their sin.

In addition to providing wise counsel, attorneys also provide evidence used to convict criminals. In a similar fashion, the Holy Spirit will prove the sin, righteousness, and judgment of the world.

John 16:7-8: "But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment."

3. The Holy Spirit is a source of knowledge, wisdom and power.

“These are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except for their own spirit within them? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

God gives His followers the Holy Spirit, so we may know God better. Since the Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit, it knows the thoughts of God and reveals those thoughts to believers. The Holy Spirit opens believers’ eyes to the hope of salvation and their inheritance in Christ.

Jesus knew that his disciples would need power beyond themselves to carry out their mission to be witnesses to the entire world.

In Ephesians 1:17-20 Paul tells the believers in Ephesus

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

4. The Holy Spirit guides us to all truth and knowledge of what is to come

The Holy Spirit tells what is yet to come. The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of Truth” in John 16:13 because he guides believers into all truth. Jesus told his disciples the Holy Spirit would make known what he hears and would only speak what the Father speaks.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you” (John 16:13-15).

5. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to believers

We’re going to talk about this in depth tomorrow, so let’s go to number 6.

## 6. The Holy Spirit is a seal in the lives of believers

In ancient times, a seal was made of wax and the wax was marked with the owner's ring. In the parable of the prodigal son, when the prodigal comes home, his father puts a ring on his finger. This was likely a signature ring, signifying that the son now had all the rights and privileges of being a member of the family. It served as a "legal signature" attesting ownership and confirming what was sealed.

When we are baptized we are marked by the water and the Spirit as having been adopted as God's children. As adopted children of God the Father, we will become joint heirs with Christ. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to his followers so that they could be confident in their salvation.

Just as you might make a deposit on something you are going to purchase, the Holy Spirit is a deposit in our lives confirming the Christ's message and that we belong to Christ.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13).

## 7. The Holy Spirit helps in our weakness and intercedes for us.

We all have times when we feel weak and don't know what to do. There are times when we are confused and overwhelmed and do not know what we should pray. In those times the Holy Spirit prays for us and helps us know what we are to do.

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

I find these to be very comforting verses because I know that even when I cannot find the right words to say in prayer, I have a helper who intercedes

with the Father on my behalf. Thus in my weakest moments, I am being lifted to the Father in prayer.

8. The Holy Spirit makes believers into a new creation and grants us eternal life

Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers to renew, sanctify, and make us holy. Just as the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit will give eternal life to believers in Christ.

“But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you” (Romans 8:10-11).

9. The Holy Spirit sanctifies and enables good fruit in our lives

The work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian’s life is an ongoing process of becoming holy through sanctification. Through the conviction and power of the Holy Spirit, believers will not indulge the sinful acts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-21) but will bear the good fruit of the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatian 5:22-23)

Jesus said, you can know a tree by the fruit that it bears. In the same way, you can tell whether or not the Holy Spirit is active in a person’s life by looking at the fruit which they bear.

I think there may be quite a few questions on today’s topic, so I am going to stop here and open it up to your thoughts and questions.