

XIV. The Apostles' Creed in Biblical Perspective

"I Believe..."

"The Holy Spirit"

Ephesians 1:3–14; Romans 8; John 14, 16

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

September 20, 2020 • Sunday Sermon

We will be looking at three passages of Scripture. Ephesians 1:3–14 contain a doxology and we see this in how the passage starts out with 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...' Ephesians 1:3–6 give praise to God the Father. Ephesians 1:7–12 give praise to God the Son. Then Ephesians 1:13–14 give praise to God the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:3–14 says [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love [5] He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, [6] to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, [8] which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

[11] In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. [13] In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee (earnest payment, down payment) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Whenever you are dealing with the ministry of the Holy Spirit and as we come to His Word to understand this article of the Apostles' Creed – I believe in the Holy Spirit – there is no text more important to see, other than Ephesians 1 and Romans 8, than John chapters 14 through 16. I want to now read a couple of verses from both chapters.

John 14:15–18,25–26 says [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."

John 16:1–15 says [1] *"I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. [2] They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. [3] And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. [4] But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.*

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. [5] But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' [6] But

because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7] Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. [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. [15] All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Romans 8:9–17 says *[9] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. [10] But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. [11] If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

[12] So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Why all these passages on the Holy Spirit? The reason is because this is where we are in our study on the Apostles' Creed which is an economic distillation of essential Biblical truth, not all the essentials but all that is in it is an essential and we readily see something when we get to the part about the Holy Spirit. What do we see? This Apostles' Creed that has been arranged for discipling God's people. This is the work of those who were disciplined by the Apostles to go back to the New Testament that was given by the Spirit of God through the Apostles to explain how everything in the Word of God in the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ and expounded in the New Testament as to what it means to be a Christian. And this is where we get this Creed that we can use in worship, discipleship and to make sure we stay faithful to sound doctrine in Christ's Church.

One of the obvious things about the Apostles' Creed is that it is Trinitarian. This creed was followed by the Nicene Creed which will expound on the Trinitarian work and existence of God. The Apostles' Creed is as follows;

I believe in God the Father Almighty, (first affirmation/1st Person of the Trinity)
maker of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, (second affirmation/2nd Person of the Trinity)
*who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,*

*was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hades.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

I believe in the Holy Spirit, (third affirmation/3rd Person of the Trinity)

*the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Most of the creed is around who Jesus is and did but the Father who sends the Son, who is now ascended, sends forth the Holy Spirit, the work of the Spirit and the blessings of the Spirit. Participate in this with me – I believe in God the Father...do you? I believe in God the Son...do you? I believe in God the Spirit...do you? If you do, then you are unusual. Ligonier Ministries does a survey of Evangelical Christian Churches every two years and the last one they did concerning the Holy Spirit over 40 percent described the Holy Spirit as a force. So at least 40 percent are not talking about the same Holy Spirit that is in the Bible. Does the Holy Spirit give power? Yes. Is He forceful? Yes, but is He the force? Sounds like these people were catechized by Star Wars more than the Bible.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Sometimes you will hear believers betray what is really working in their mind, especially when they refer to the Holy Spirit as ‘*It* is really important.’ Sometimes our vocabulary betrays us. That’s an impersonal pronoun. The Bible never calls Him an ‘it’ for He is a Him, He – the Holy Spirit. If you are ever in a Christian church attempting to be faithful to Christ, one thing ought to be evident, rapidly and clearly and that is they believe there is one God who dwells in three Persons. It is shouted and bleeds out of their hymns. It should be seen in their confessions, and heard in the preaching and teaching. It is not one God who has three responsibilities or three different uniforms or three Gods who act like one, but one God who exists in three Persons.

It should be heard in the doctrine of creation. The Father authored creation, the Son accomplished it and the Holy Spirit administered it and took the chaos and made it into a cosmos of order. The same thing happens in redemption. The Father has authored our salvation to the praise of His glorious grace. The Son has accomplished our salvation to the praise of His glorious grace. The Holy Spirit has applied salvation to the praise of His glorious grace. It is seen in God’s providence. The Father oversees us as His children. His Son intercedes for us and the Holy Spirit is at work in us so that all things work together for good. The Trinitarian nature of God ought to be abundantly clear. Now certainly the doctrine of the Trinity is beyond my comprehension but God’s existence while it is supernatural, supra-rational, supra-logical is never irrational or illogical. He has revealed Himself with truth from His Word as one God in three Persons and the attribute of all attributes to describe God in which all other attributes derive their existence is God is holy. I know some would say it’s love and God is love but I would suggest the attribute of all attributes is God is holy. There is none like it.

Holiness has two meanings. One is unique, one of a kind and the second is perfection in righteousness. Whenever they are worshipping God in heaven there is one word they use – holy. Is His love true and do we praise Him for His love? Yes for God has multiple glorious attributes

like love, grace, patience, mercy, righteous, etc. and I praise God for them but the one that modifies them all is God's love is holy. God's grace is holy. God's mercy is holy. In the Bible in Isaiah and Revelation where we see those in heaven praising God they don't just say this word once – they say it in the normative, then in the comparative and then to the superlative. They say 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty' and even the doorposts in heaven have enough sense to tremble in His presence.

I Corinthians 2:11 says [12] *For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* He is the Holy Spirit. When you walk with Him, you surrender to Him, are filled with Him and the fruit of the Spirit comes then what happens? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, but who is He? He is the one of a kind righteous Spirit and because of what Christ did on our behalf is not free to come after us, for us, live within us, change us and bring us to glory – it is the Holy Spirit.

He has many other names but His paramount name in the New Testament is in John 14, 15, and 16. That paramount name is the Helper. In John Jesus says 'I will send to you another Helper.' It is a tough word to translate – Counselor, Comforter. The Greek word transliterated is the word *paraclete*. *Para* means alongside of and an example of this is parachurch ministries – ministries that come alongside of the church and support the church. *Clete* is the word *kaleo* which means the call. Jesus will send another One who will call you from darkness to light, from sin to the Savior, the One who came for you to save you.

In this John 14 and 15 passage Jesus has told us we are going to get persecuted and targeted and don't be surprised. Don't fall away for remember I told you this was coming and this is why it's really important for you that I go to heaven, because if I'm here on earth you have to come find Me, but when I go to heaven I'll be with each one of you by sending to you the paraclete – the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. In other words, the One in the womb with Jesus who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, guided Him as He grew in wisdom and stature, favor with God, favor with man in the humanity of Jesus, was with Him in baptism as the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Him, in ministry, sustained Him in the temptations of the wilderness, sent Him to the cross, took Him out of the tomb as He was resurrected by the Holy Spirit and then that Spirit received Him into glory. This is the same Spirit that is with you when you are born again to the time He brings you to glory. I will be with you as I send My Spirit to come alongside of you. More than that, He'll take up residence within you. He will be the Comforter.

What do you think when you live in the midst of all the assaults in a broken world and hear that He is the Comforter? He will comfort you but it's much more than that. Sometimes on a sheet of music you will see the music term *forte* and it means strong. When the Holy Spirit comes He is your Com-forte – He is your refuge. He fortifies you. It's not He comes in to pick up the pieces but He is there with you and the Lord is in you – He is your refuge and strength. Jesus gives Him to us – the Spirit of Christ.

We see Him in the world as we read in John 16, *He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment* and He is restraining sin in the world. Revelation 20:7–8 says [7] *And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison* (a loosening of Satan) [8] *and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.* It will be horrendous for a 'short' season. Paul puts it this way in II Thessalonians 2:6–7, [6] *And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.* [7] *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only He who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.*

The One who restrains is referring to the Holy Spirit. His ministry in the world is restraining those with total depravity from living with absolute depravity.

I believe the restraining presence of the Holy Spirit has been removed but I'm praying it's not and that we're going to get into this thing as a revived church, as we ought, and then the Holy Spirit through His revived church will do His restraining work and His converting work. The Holy Spirit in common grace restrains sin in society and in redeeming grace converts sinners whose lives change and are transformed. I believe we're seeing something like that right now which is one of the reasons I'm praying for the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is working in our lives revival wise when instead of raging at the darkness we'll start lighting the candles – Gospel candles. Many of us in the flesh, seeing what is happening, are raging at the darkness. It's much more effective to light the Gospel candle and let it shine and dispel the darkness.

The other thing the Holy Spirit is doing is He gives us the Word of God – He is the Spirit of truth. The very One who gave the Word of God through the Apostles and Prophets, then comes to live within you and is your Teacher. One of the ways He helps you is by giving the gifts of preaching and teaching in the church through which He blesses you. That's why it's important for you to understand that the Holy Spirit is not a force but a Person. With a Person you can quench your relationship, you grieve your relationship and even do that unpardonable sin which is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. That means they have said 'no' to the Holy Spirit's ministry which is to bring people to Christ and the only way you can be pardoned is through Christ so that is why saying 'no' to the Spirit is blasphemy.

Why would Paul say 'don't grieve or quench the Spirit' if we couldn't do it? To quench literally means to throw water on and we quench the Spirit when we decide we want to neglect God's Word or when we decide there is something more important than the teaching, preaching and encounter with God's Word. I'm not talking about providential hindrances. The Holy Spirit gave you the Word of God and has been given to teach you the Word of God. He works with the Word of God. John 6:63 says [63] *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.* When I say 'no' to worship, Word and prayer I am grieving the Holy Spirit. When we put ourselves before Him we quench the Spirit and no wonder the world goes off when they see that. That's why we have the Spirit of Christ within us so we can walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit and then bear fruit of the Spirit as that Spirit of God calls you.

I grew up in a home where we went to church every time the doors were open and I heard many great preachers but I didn't hear Jesus, because not only do you have to have the preaching of the Word but you have to have the Spirit of God. There was nothing wrong with the preaching I heard but when I went to church with Cindy, the man speaking was not scintillating by any means but that day I heard Jesus. I couldn't wait to say 'no' to sin and 'yes' to Jesus. I went home and read all the way through the New Testament. I woke my wife Cindy up the next morning and said 'What do I do next?' The Holy Spirit got a hold of my life. I was the boy who wouldn't pack a pair of pants when I went to visit my grandparents in hopes I wouldn't have to go to church. Now I'm looking up places I can go to hear someone preach God's Word.

So what happened? I didn't become something I wasn't. There is Someone who came to me and made me something I wasn't. It was the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. All of a sudden I heard God's Word. Faithful is He who calls you. How does He call you? He calls you with His Word and by His Spirit. He calls you externally. No one who came to Jesus came to Him without somebody talking to them. Why did someone talk to them? It was the Spirit of

God who enabled them and sent them to them. Then they heard when the Spirit of God gave them eyes to see and ears to hear and that's the internal call. You are born again by the Spirit of God who uses the Word of God and you come from death unto life. Now the call – whosoever will may come. You can come because God has now changed your 'wanter', for now you want Jesus, before that you just wanted yourself.

II Corinthians 5:17 says [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* The Spirit not only calls you, regenerates you but takes up residence within you. He starts teaching you how to kill the old man and put on the new man, how to kill sin, pursue obedience, not to be saved but because of your love for the Savior. Because of the Spirit of God in your life you want to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in your life. You have not only been born again into the family of God but you have been adopted into the family of God and the Spirit of adoption has come to you.

Many times one of the great challenges in the ministry of adoption is particularly when there are older children that have been adopted. I have learned about a phrase known as 'detachment syndrome.' The children have been rejected and have been orphans and they perform to get adopted – will I perform well enough to stay adopted or will I get taken back to the orphanage? It's hard to believe and kind of in self-protection they don't believe that you are really going to keep them. If there is anyone who thinks how in the world did we ever get adopted into the family of God, it's us for He didn't need us but He loved us and He adopted us into His family. He says 'I will not leave you as orphans' (John 14:18). I will come to you and the Spirit of adoption gives you an attachment syndrome, for My Spirit will bear witness with you spirit and you will cry out 'Abba Father, my dear Father!'

The Holy Spirit is at work in your life that will take you all the way to glory. He'll go with you through the valley of the shadow of death. He will be with the church as we make disciples of all the nations. He'll be with you till the end of the age. He'll be with you when you are under persecution. He will give you what to say and how to say it. Christ in you by the Spirit of Christ who is in you and who is at work. Oh the magnificent ways He is at work in our life! Here is the takeaway from this study.

This Holy Spirit is at work in your life sovereignly. Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3:5-8, [5] *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [7] Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [8] The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

God's Spirit always works with God's Word and through the prayers of His people but I am not sovereign over the Holy Spirit. I can pray and read the Word because the Spirit does sovereignly work with both of those. I can use the Word to call upon the Holy Spirit to work with which He does work but it is sovereign of God. You are what you are today by the sovereign grace of God and that's the only reason you know Jesus. It wasn't because you were smarter or more spiritual than someone else but it was because the Holy Spirit sovereignly worked in your life.

We who know Him ought to sing more than anyone the hymn *Amazing Grace*;
Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Secondly, it's supernatural and can't be explained. I was a profane, immoral, blasphemous, ungodly, violent man and now the same mouth that cursed God every sentence is teaching the Word of God. I'm telling you that's a miracle. I know it's a miracle and it's a miracle that we know Jesus. Everyone who knows Jesus has had a heart transplant – the old heart was cut out and the new heart was given. It's a miracle. You are a new creation and it's the miraculous, wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It is miraculous what is at work in our lives.

Who are the three most prolific writers of the Bible? Moses, David and Paul – all three are murderers. How do you like that for a miracle? I don't know about you but that encourages me. Here is a group of men who you see traitors and religious terrorists that kills Christians and destroys churches. That particular man because the greatest church planter and the greatest evangelist that ever lived. The miracle of grace is at work here.

Thirdly, it is saving. Jesus saves us from the power of our sin, the persuasion of our sin, the penalty of our sin and He is saving us from the practice of our sin. He will save us from the presence of our sin and that's why Jesus went to the cross. He didn't go to the cross for your self-esteem or for a therapeutic gospel so you feel better or that you would become the best salesman at the office or that you would get healthy, wealthy and wise. He may entrust you with all kinds of things in His providence but He went to the cross to save His people from their sins. That is what I have to offer to you today in the name of Jesus Christ. He has done a saving work for us.

Fourthly, He has done a sensible work. We used to say Holy Ghost but ghost was specific and spirit was anomalous and nowadays it's flipped. We now say Holy Spirit where spirit is specific and ghost is anomalous, but what are we talking about here? We are talking about a Person who cannot be seen. That's what spirit is, but yet it's sensible. I hear Him speaking to me in the Word. I see Him and here is one of the ways I see Jesus. I'm looking at those I am speaking to and there is no reason for you to be here today desiring to worship God in spirit and in truth if the Holy Spirit who called you out, did not call you together. We are making a statement and one of those statements is we who were not a people have become the people of God and we want to declare the glory of God – praise God from whom all blessings flow. Only the Spirit of God can turn us from idolaters to worshipers in spirit and in truth.

Fifthly, He is sanctifying as He is setting us apart that we might know Him and love Him.

Sixthly, He is sealing us for He is the Guarantee. I know I'm going to heaven in Jesus. Why? It is because I have the Guarantee, the earnest money, the down payment – the Holy Spirit is the Guarantee that He will finish the work that He has begun. His Spirit bears witness with my spirit that we are sons and daughters of God.

Seventhly, He secures us. Jesus says in John 6:37–39, [37] *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.* [38] *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.* [39] *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day.***

I stood on a rock one time right outside of Boston where George Whitfield preached. They said in that sermon that when he got to the end he said 'In my mind's eye I dreamed and went up to the gates of heaven and said to Peter, 'Peter, who is in heaven? Are there any Baptists?' Peter said 'No.' I said 'Are there any Presbyterians?' 'No.' 'Any Episcopalians?' 'No.' 'Then who is there?' Peter said 'Those who were bought by the blood of Jesus, filled with

the Spirit of God – Christians – that’s who is here.’ Then my mind’s eye took me to the gates of hell and I said to Satan, ‘Any Baptists in hell?’ “Oh yeah.’ ‘Any Presbyterians?’ ‘Oh yeah.’ ‘Any Episcopalians?’ ‘Oh yeah.’ ‘Satan, are there any Christians in hell.’ ‘Oh no, there are in heaven because of the blood of Jesus that sealed them and the Holy Spirit who sealed them and secured them for He loses not one.’”

I have currently given up on watching the TV program Fixer Upper but I thought I would reference just to finish this study. I have an eighth ‘s’ for you and that is surrender. Don’t quench or grieve the Spirit, just surrender to Him. He won’t come in and fix up your life, for He will tear it down and you won’t get a nice little bungalow but you will get a mansion whereby He dwells in you. He doesn’t just come alongside of you, but He dwells in you. He is not doing a fixer upper but He is doing an extreme makeover because He is doing a complete takeover. Surrender to Him who will take you to Jesus. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

As the hymn says;

I surrender all

I surrender all

All to Thee my blessed Savior

I surrender all

If there is anyone reading this who has not surrendered to the Spirit’s call to come to Christ that you would do so today and if you would like to pray with someone please contact me at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Just come to Jesus by His Spirit, who died for you. He is ready by His Spirit to take up residence in you and bring you to be with Himself, even as He dwells with you by His Spirit, sealing you, sanctifying you, saving you, securing you and sovereignly working in your life. Just put your trust in Him. If you have done that then I would say to you that you surrender to Him every day, in the Word, get in prayer and gather with His people.

Don’t grieve or quench Him, but surrender and be led by the Spirit. Be filled in the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit and watch as He works in your life and you bear the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus, work in us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Spirit of the living God bear fruit in us that people will be drawn to Christ and we will become more like Him for I pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Power Point

The Holy Spirit

The Paraclete

The Spirit of Christ

- Sovereign
- Supernatural
- Saving
- Sensible
- Sanctifying
- Sealing
- Securing