

“Creed: What Christians Believe and Why---The Holy Spirit”

Acts 2:1-4 (CEB)

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This passage read is from the story of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in all of His fullness. Imagine a sound from heaven howling like a fierce wind. For many the howling winds of Hurricane Irma come to mind. Imagine that howling wind from heaven happening right here, right now. And scripture says “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”

As we work our way through The Apostle’s Creed we now get to the phrase, I believe in the Holy Spirit. The Apostle’s Creed has 3 paragraphs. The first dealing with I believe in God. The second, I believe in Jesus Christ, and now the third, I believe in the Holy Spirit. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit---the Trinity. The Creed is divided into that trinitarian format.

We believe in one God 3 persons. The mysterious and miraculous accepted by faith that there is one God...a 3 in one.

Through the years there has been much preaching about Jesus, but seemingly not much on the Holy Spirit. In this passage in Acts we know the Holy Spirit came in His complete fullness, but not only Jesus mentioned the Holy Spirit but also the Spirit of God is mentioned in the Old Testament 80-90 times. In the Old Testament it says God’s spirit “rested” or “came over” the judges, the warriors and leaders. From the beginning there has always been the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament it seemed like it was just the heroes of faith that had the Spirit of God upon them, but notice Joel 2:28

**Joel 2:28 Common English Bible (CEB) <sup>28</sup> After that I will pour out my spirit upon everyone; your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.**

Spirit poured out not just on the super believers, the heroes of faith, but His spirit will be poured out upon...who...EVERYONE!

When Jesus was physically on earth and was Emmanuel---God with us. But he was going to die and on the third day be resurrected and then ascend into heaven. Would we be without the presence of God. Well, Jesus addressed that with His disciples.

**John 14:16 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever.”**

In the original Greek (the language the New Testament), **the word Counselor in this passage is Paraclete.** The word literally means=PARA, which means alongside of, and KLETOS, which means to call. Jesus has called the Holy Spirit to be alongside of us. So, when He ascended into heaven God was going to be right along side of us through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us of our sin. (John 16:8) Yes, the Holy Spirit convicts us sin and therefore the guilt, but then the Holy Spirit reminds us that through Jesus the sins are all wiped away and cleaned up.... gone. We will talk more specifically about the Forgiveness of Sins later as we continue our study of the Creed.

The Holy Spirit also gives gifts. Spiritual and powerful gifts given for His glory. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are: knowledge, wisdom, prophecy, faith, healing, working of miracles, discernment, speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues. There are other gifts as well and in 1 Corinthians 12 it says a “demonstration of the Spirit is given to each one for the common good.” (verse 7)

Along with gifts of the spirit there is fruit of the Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-23** <sup>22</sup> **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** <sup>23</sup> **gentleness, and self-control.**

How “fruity”, how spirit controlled are you? Do you have all of these characteristics? I got to confess there are some days I have more love than other days. And certainly, there are days when I’m not very patient. Oh, not to just have that self-control, but to be controlled by the Holy Spirit in all areas of our life.

In our lives, in our church it is the Holy Spirit power of Pentecost that should lead and guide us.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Do not put out the Spirit’s fire.”**

Some translations would say, “Don’t quench the Spirit.” Let’s pause just a minute and explore how one would put out the Spirit’s fire. Lack of maturity can put out the Spirit’s fire. Gossip---can put out the Spirit’s fire. Bickering and arguing can put out the Spirit’s fire. Lack of harmony---can put out the Spirit’s fire. Not giving and serving as you have been called by God can help put out the Spirit’s fire. Disobedience can put out the Spirit’s fire. Sin throws a bucket of cold water on the Spirit’s fire. Not doing God’s will can also put out the Spirit’s fire. Oh, don’t put out the Spirit’s fire. Burn baby burn.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. He convicts of sin. He is always with us. He gives Gifts and fruit. But oh, there is so much more:

He speaks, He intercedes, He testifies, He leads, He sends, He commands, He reveals, He abides in us, He strengthens, He encourages, He disciplines, He guides, He comforts/heals, He protects He calls, He changes and transforms us, He is truth, He brings glory.

Adam Hamilton in his book *Creed* (Abingdon, 2016) says “I think many Christians live Spirit-deficient lives, a bit like someone who is sleep-deprived, nutrient-deprived, or oxygen deprived.... our spiritual lives are a bit anemic as we try living the Christian life by our own power and wisdom.” (page 88-89)

We need to listen to the nudge of the Holy Spirit. We hear voices of the world telling us what we should do and we need to make a choice. Theologian P.T. Forsyth said this, “Unless there is within us that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us.” (quoted in ‘Men of Integrity,’ March/April 2001)

In fact, we could kind of put it like old cartoons use to put it with an angel in one ear and the devil in the other ear. **(image)** However, I saw this quote that I liked. “I have an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. I’m also deaf in one ear.

Ah---but which ear is deaf????

A profound word for me came when I was a youth at church camp in Terre Haute, Indiana and the preacher was preaching from Ephesians 5:18.

**Ephesians 5:18 Modern English Version (MEV) 18 Do not be drunk with wine, for that is reckless living. But be filled with the Spirit.**

The preacher explained that the word “be filled” in the original Greek language was an imperative. A command. We as Christians are to be filled with the Spirit. I had been a Christian, but I had not asked the Holy Spirit to fill me and take control of my life. I went down and knelt and had an experience that until that time I had never had...more about that in just a minute.

Rev. Billy Graham puts it this way: “Here he draws a contrast between two things. A person who is filled with alcohol is controlled or dominated by alcohol. Its presence and power have overridden his normal abilities and actions. It is interesting that we often say someone is “under the influence” of alcohol. Now that is somewhat the meaning of being filled with the Spirit. We are “under the influence” of the Spirit. Instead of doing things only with our own strength or ability, He empowers us. Instead of doing only what we want to do, we now are guided by Him. Unfortunately, millions of God’s people do not enjoy the unlimited spiritual wealth at their disposal because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit. We are not filled once for all, like a bucket. Instead, we are to be filled constantly. It might be translated, “Be filled and keep on being filled,” or “Be being filled.” Ephesians 5:18 literally says, “Keep on being filled with the Spirit.” (Billy Graham, Holy Spirit, 1978, pages 96-98)

Oh, we know the term DUI means Driving Under the Influence, but maybe the DUI should stand for Divinely Unashamedly Influenced.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. Here’s what I believe and why.

1.\*He convicted me of my sins. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade I was convicted of my sins and asked Jesus to forgive me and come into my life. The Holy Spirit still convicts me of my sins. When I sin, not only do I know it is wrong, but the Holy Spirit lets me know, and I even feel guilt from His conviction.

2.\*He gave me a peace when over 40 years ago I was going to have a major potentially life threatening or life altering surgery. People in church prayed for my healing. I stood and said thank you for your prayers, but I know whatever happens it will be okay. I had a peace. Direct healing did not occur, but a quicker recovery than normal did, and an attitude that amazed the doctors. The Holy Spirit was at work.

3.\* I literally experienced His warmth; literally, as a warm sensation overcame me and I was reduced to shaking and tears and I asked the Holy Spirit to fill my life. It was when I heard that preacher preach about the imperative/command from Ephesians 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit. A point when I yielded to be under his divine influence, but knowing that that process is a daily one.

4. The Holy Spirit confirmed through affirmations and assurance that I had his blessing (and finally Sarah's acceptance) for her to marry me.

5. \*I felt the Holy Spirit's nudging, and heard His still small voice as He called me into full time ministry

6. \*The Holy Spirit calmed me when I shook my hand at God and said, "I can't take it anymore."

7. \*The Holy Spirit comforted me when I got a phone call out of the blue telling me that my dad had dropped dead of a heart attack at the age of 64.

8.\*Sarah and I have felt the Holy Spirit guide and lead us in church appointments.

9\*The Holy Spirit has reminded me of His presence even when I didn't "feel" very spiritual. He told me I was loved by God.

10\*I believe in the Holy Spirit as He continues to lead and guide. Without His strength, His guidance and His power, my life would be weak, wasted, and without meaning.

It is not how can I get more of the Holy Spirit, but how can the Holy Spirit get more of me.

Oh, beloved to say we believe in the Holy Spirit---we need to claim His presence, His power, His protection on us and on this---His church.

I believe in God the Father. I believe in Jesus Christ His Son. I believe in the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 13:14 "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."**