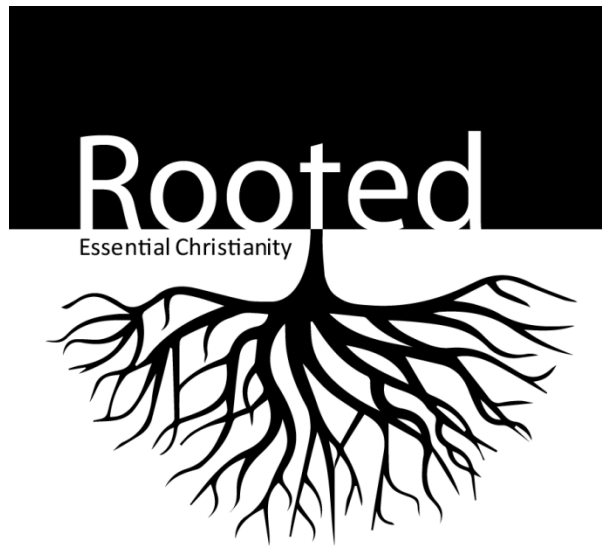




The Apostle's Creed

Part 7 – The Helper

I believe in...the Holy Spirit

John 16:4-15

As Jesus prepared the disciples for his death and ultimate departure from earth he told them, "It is to your advantage that I go away." In doing so, Jesus promised to send "the Helper," the Holy Spirit. The implications of this are huge.

The Holy Spirit is equal in power and glory with God the father and God the Son. This is the mystery of the Trinity. We worship one God who is in three persons.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is God
 - a. Lying to the Holy Spirit is equivalent to lying to God. (Acts 5:3)
 - b. He possesses qualities only God has.
 - i. Divine knowledge – The Spirit searches all things (1 Corinthians 2:10-11); Power – God's work through Paul through the Spirit (Romans 15:18-19); Eternality – (Hebrews 9:14)
 - c. He is associated with the Father and Son equally. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
2. The Holy Spirit is a person – He possesses qualities only a person has.
 - a. Intelligence and knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:10-11); A will (1 Corinthians 12:11); Emotions (Ephesians 4:30); He can be known (John 14:17).
 - b. Jesus uses the personal pronoun to describe him in John 16:7,8.
3. The Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Godhead.
 - a. The Spirit is God, but he is not the Father or the Son. He's also not just a spiritual extension of the Father. He is distinct from the father and the Son.
 - b. Westminster Confession 2.3 states that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. (John 14; 16)

What does he do?

A few highlights of the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament:

1. He was active in the creation of the world. (Genesis 1:2)
2. He equipped the artisans of the tabernacle whose work was to point people to God's redemptive work through their craftsmanship. (Exodus 31:1-6)
3. He spoke through prophets to point people back to God's saving work. (Isaiah 61:1)
4. He enabled and led certain leaders of Israel to bring Israel out of oppression and slavery, and to show the saving power of God. (Judges 14:9)
5. He inspired the writers of the scriptures all of which pointed to Christ (the Old Testament and New Testament as well). (1 Peter 1:21)
6. He worked faith (regeneration) in the saints of the Old Testament. (Ezekiel 36, 37; Hebrews 11)

The Holy Spirit is described as “The Helper (comforter)” in verse 7. In what ways is he a help?

(Categories taken from Kevin DeYoung’s booklet on the Holy Spirit - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/publications/the-holy-spirit>)

1. He convicts.
 - a. He shines a spotlight on our own sin revealing our need to be made right with God; a spotlight on the righteousness that is revealed in Christ; and a spotlight on the judgment that is to come. (John 16:8, 9)
 - b. For the elect, those whom God has marked out for salvation, it is the Spirit who leads them in the initial act of hating their sin, and turning from it and toward faith in the risen Christ.
2. He converts.
 - a. It is the Spirit who gives us the new birth, who gives us the ability to understand the things of God, and thus repent and grab hold of the gospel. (John 3; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 14 WSC 31*)
3. He applies.
 - a. The Holy Spirit applies to us all that Christ accomplished for us. This is called Union with Christ. (WSC 29, 30)
 - b. We are united to Christ by faith, through the Spirit. It is this very union with Christ that allows us to call God, our Father. (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6)
4. He glorifies. (John 16:13-15)
 - a. One of his main roles is to glorify Christ. This is part of the “spotlight” work.
 - b. He does this by leading God’s people in all truth. (John 16:13)
 - i. Part of this leading is by enlightening our minds to truth as we read scripture.
 - ii. Scripture, that the Holy Spirit inspired (2 Peter 1:21)
 - iii. Scripture, that was actually breathed out by God, through His Spirit, through the work of men (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - c. By highlighting the work of Christ, revealed to us in Scripture, the Holy Spirit leads us to glorify Him.
5. He sanctifies.
 - a. Definitive sanctification – By being united to Christ through the Spirit we are sanctified – declared holy, set apart, pure.
 - b. Progressive sanctification – Through the Spirit, we are also able to daily put to death our sinful desires and to actually walk in obedience to God. (Colossians 3:1-17, WSC 35)
6. He equips.
 - a. The Spirit equips us with spiritual gifts for service to God and for the building up of the church (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11)
 - i. Teaching, exhorting, leading, serving, doing acts of mercy, having faith, administering, etc.
 - ii. Healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues
 - b. Cessationist vs. continuationist
 - i. Cessationist – the gifts of healing, prophecy, speaking in tongues were unique to the apostolic age. They were necessary to confirm the message of the gospel. Since we now have the completed word of God, they are no longer normative.
 - ii. Continuationist – those gifts are still useful and normative for the building up of God’s people and are still practiced within the church.
7. He promises. (Ephesians 1:13-14)
 - a. The Spirit is called our guarantee, or seal, of the promise of our inheritance in Christ.
 - b. When someone believes the gospel, repents of their sins, and turns to Christ in faith they are indwelt by the Spirit who is a guarantee that they will be kept by God and granted full admission into his kingdom with the inheritance.