

KNOW

Sermon 3: Holy Spirit



Introduction

10 minutes

The ancient **creeds developed in the first few hundred years of the Church** remind us of the faith that we share with Christians all over the world and throughout the centuries. From the earliest days of the Church, Christians have summarized the crucial understandings of the Christian faith into unified statements.

The Nicene Creed, written in **325 AD**, is **one such statement of belief that has unified the Church across the centuries**.

1,700 years ago, our forefathers decided we should have a creed that would help us **solidify our beliefs**.

The Nicene Creed is not Scripture, nor should it be held in as high regard as we hold or view Scripture. However, Scripture supports every word of the Nicene Creed.

The creed **contains** the **key spiritual truths** of the Bible condensed into a manageable format, **but** it has to be **unpacked** to be fully useful.

Most of us Christians agree with the Nicene Creed, but we in the Assemblies of God have our distinctives. We take the third stanza of the Nicene Creed and we reveal our Fundamental Truths 7–9.

Fundamental Truth #7:

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.

This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the initial experience of the new birth. With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as: an overflowing fullness of the Spirit, a deepened reverence for God, an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost.

Fundamental Truth #8:

The initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance. The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues, but is different in purpose and use.

Fundamental Truth #9:

Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God. The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is

- The building block of the spiritual life
- The blueprint to life
- The key to life

The Holy Spirit is, from our perspective, **the link** between the risen Christ and the Church. It is ironic that so much confusion exists over the Holy Spirit **when** He is the person of the Trinity with whom we interact the most. The Spirit is **the least mentioned member** of the Trinity in the Bible.

The **Spirit's role** is to point us

- To God
- To Jesus

The doctrine of the Spirit is vitally important if we are going to be serious about Christian faith. He's the **DNA**—it all starts with the Holy Spirit.

We couldn't even understand anything else about God if it weren't for the Spirit. Without the Spirit:

- There'd be no Bible
- Prayer wouldn't work
- Jesus wouldn't have come

The creed dedicates a stanza to the study of the Holy Spirit. It states:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.

1. **Diety**

The Holy Spirit is to be thought of in the same way as the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is called Lord, and this is very significant. This word "**Lord**" is the Greek word **Kyrios**, and that matters because **Kyrios** is the same word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the original Hebrew name for God—**Yahweh**.

Lord was the Old Testament shorthand for the proper name of God. When we call the Holy Spirit "**Lord**," we are calling Him God, just like we do Jesus. The Holy Spirit rounds out the Trinity—God in one essence, but three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is a mystery, I'll grant you, but it is the proper way to understand the God of the Bible. Like with Jesus, there was never a time when God existed that the Holy Spirit did not exist.

2. **Person**

The Spirit has the attributes of personhood. He is said to have a mind and a will and emotions—it is said to be possible to "grieve" the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is always referring to the Spirit with personal pronouns (John 16:13–14), and the only way that we could know anything about God is for Him to reveal it to us first.

We are too limited to figure God out on our own. God has revealed Himself to us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit presented that revelation to us through prophets.

This is primarily referring to the writers of Scripture—both Old Testament and New. They were guided by the Holy Spirit in what they wrote. Paul says that all Scripture is "God-breathed," and we are going to see that God's breath is a code for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit spoke through those prophets in what came to be written.

To be correct, we could say that the Spirit “speaks” through the prophets because they still exist. I should know—I am one. Now, don’t get freaked out by that. A prophet is just someone who speaks for God. We tend to think of it primarily as someone who predicts the future—and that can be a part of it sometimes—but primarily it’s just about letting God speak through you.

So, the Holy Spirit?

- *God? Yes.*
- *Power? Yes.*
- *But person too.*

But what does this person do? The answer to that question is, “A lot.”

We could talk about the Holy Spirit for a solid year and not exhaust His richness, but here is a short list of what the Spirit does...

- *He gives us wisdom and reveals truth.*
- *He empowers us with special gifts and abilities for leadership and service.*
- *He brings unity and direction to the Church.*
- *He convicts us of sin in our lives—He’s that still small voice that says, “Are you sure you want to do that?”*
- *He comforts us in times of troubles.*
- *He causes virtues to grow in us—we talked about them in depth last fall, the “fruit of the Spirit.”*
- *He gives us an assurance of our standing before God.*
- *He helps us understand the Bible as we read it.*
- *He brings healing for our physical and emotional needs.*
- *He helps us in our prayers.*
- *He helps us avoid sin and live better lives.*
- *He gives us confidence to share our faith with others.*
- *He helps us to know God better.*

*But the **most important thing** that the Holy Spirit does—amidst all of these important things—is the thing that the creed references right in that first line: “**the giver of life.**”*

3. Empowerment

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father—the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire—according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the enablement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.

This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12–17; Acts 10:44–46; Acts 11:14–16; and Acts 15:7–9).

With the baptism in the Holy Spirit come such experiences as:

- an overflowing fullness of the Spirit, John 7:37–39, Acts 4:8
- a deepened reverence for God, Acts 2:43, Hebrews 12:28
- an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work, Acts 2:42
- and a more active love for Christ, for His Word and for the lost, Mark 16:20[1]

1. The baptism in the Spirit is intended for all who profess faith in Christ, having been born again and have received the indwelling of the Spirit. (Numbers 11:29)
2. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an operation of the Spirit that is distinct and separate from his work of regeneration. For the disciples, it was clearly a post-regeneration experience. (Acts 11:17)
3. The Bible does speak of people being filled with the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost. However, the term baptized in the Holy Spirit is only used after Christ's ascension. Luke 1:15; 24:49
4. There are many signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit, but in the book of Acts speaking in tongues is the initial outward sign accompanying the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
5. The baptism of the Holy Spirit becomes faded glory if a person does not continue in prayer, witness and a life of holiness. (Ephesians 5:18)

4. Purification (Sanctification)

1. Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God. The Scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by the faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit.[2]

Sanctification: From the Greek *hagiasmos* means to...

- make holy (i.e. morally pure, spiritually whole, separated from evil and dedicated to God and his purposes)
- to consecrate (i.e. to set apart) and to separate from the ungodly patterns and practices of the world

It involves being set apart from sin, so as to have intimate companionship with God and serve him effectively. In practical terms, Sanctification involves an ongoing process of spiritual growth, development and maturity by which God refines us spiritually, prepares us for his purposes and involves us in his plans. God is committed to changing me.

[1] "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit," The Assemblies of God, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#7> (Accessed January 15, 2025).

[2] "Sanctification," The Assemblies of God, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths#9> (Accessed January 15, 2025).

Words used for sanctification:

- Sanctify: (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- Love: (Matthew 22:37)
- Blameless and holy: (1 Thessalonians 3:13)
- Perfecting holiness: 2 Corinthians 7:1)
- Pure Heart, Good Conscience, and Sincere Faith: (1 Timothy 1:5)
- Pure and Blameless: (Philippians 1:10)
- Set free from sin: (Romans 6:18)
- Died to sin: (Romans 6:2)
- Slavery to righteousness leading to holiness: (Romans 6:19)
- Obey his commands: (1 John 3:22)
- Overcomes the world: (1 John 5:4)

PHRASES that describe the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification

- **Liberating** us from the power and slavery of sin: (Romans 6:1–19),
- **Separating** us from the sinful patterns and practices of the world: (Romans 12:1–2; Malachi 3:2–3)
- **Renewing** our nature and character to be like Jesus Christ: (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- **Producing** in us the fruit—the effects and character traits—of the Spirit: (Galatians 5:16; 22–23)
- **Enabling** us to live in a way that influences others to follow Christ: (John 17:15–19, 23)

2. Sanctification is not about absolute perfection, but righteousness—relating rightly to God and doing right according to his principles demonstrated through moral purity, godly obedience and blameless character (Philippians 2:14–15; Colossians 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 2:10; Luke 1:6)

With God's help, spiritual enablement, and our identification with Christ's death the following is true:

- We are set free from sin's power (Romans 6:18 ESV).
- We should no longer be swayed by sin's influence (Romans 6:11 ESV)
- We have the power for spiritual victory through our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- Through the Holy Spirit, we are able to resist and overcome the temptation to defy God (1 John 2:1; 3:6)

3. Sanctification was God's will and purpose for the Israelites in the Old Testament.

They were to live holy and sanctified lives, separated from the wicked and spiritually corrupt lifestyles of the nations around them (Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 2 Chronicles 29:5)

In a similar way, Sanctification is a requirement for all of Christ's followers. God's Word teaches that Hebrews 12:14 (ESV) Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

4. God's children achieve Sanctification:

- by faith and dependence on God: (Acts 26:18)
- by identifying with Christ in his death and resurrection (John 15:4–10; Romans 6:1–11; 1 Corinthians 1:30)
- by the personal sacrifice and shed blood of Christ: (1 John 1:7–9; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:14)
- by studying and applying God's Word: (John 17:17)
- by the spiritually renewing, life-transforming work of the Holy Spirit in their minds and hearts: Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Philippians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (

5. Sanctification is both a work of God and a work of his people (Philippians 2:12–13 see above)

Christ's followers must participate in the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work...

- by refraining from evil: (Romans 6:1)
- by purifying themselves "from everything that contaminates body and spirit" (2 Corinthians 7:1)
- by keeping themselves from being polluted morally and spiritually by the world: (James 1:27)

In the New Testament, sanctification is not pictured as a slow process of giving up sin little by little

- a. It is a definite and decisive act by which the believer—by God's grace—is set free from the control of Satan: (Romans 6:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - b. Sanctification is also described as a lifelong process by which a follower of Christ continues to put to death the natural impulse toward sin (Romans 8:1–17)
- progressively transformed to be more like Jesus: (2 Corinthians 3:18; Job 23:10)
 - grows in grace: (2 Peter 3:18)
 - exercises a greater love for God and others: (Matthew 22:37–39; 1 John 4:7–8, 11, 20–21; Mark 12:30)
 - fulfills God's purpose for his or her life.

6. True sanctification requires that believers:

- maintain a close personal relationship with Christ: (John 15:4)
- participate in fellowship with other Christians: (Ephesians 4:15–16)
- devote themselves to prayer: (Colossians 4:2; Matthew 6:5–13)
- obey God's Word: (John 17:17)
- be sensitive to God's presence and care: (Matthew 6:25–34)
- love what is right and hate what is wicked and wrong: (Hebrews 1:9)
- put sin to death: (Romans 6)
- submit to God's discipline: (Hebrews 12:5–6)
- continue to obey and be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit: (Romans 8:14; Ephesians 5:18).

7. Experiential sanctification.

At times, sanctification may involve a definite crisis experience or exceptional encounter with God after one's initial experience of spiritual salvation for example see Isaiah 6:1–8 (ESV).

In such an instance, a follower of Christ may:

- receive a clear revelation of God's holiness—his purity, perfection and separation from evil
- experience an awareness that God is calling him or her to a unique task

This would involve setting oneself apart in a greater way from sin and worldliness in order to get closer to God and become better prepared for his divine purposes (2 Corinthians 6:17–18).

NOTE: Such awareness should characterize all Christians' lives, as they present themselves to God as living sacrifices, reserved for his purposes and honor. As a result, they receive from the Holy Spirit the needed grace, purity, power and victory to live holy lives pleasing to God. God the Father delights in transforming sinners into saints—"holy ones"—so as to have a pure and blameless bride (i.e., the church) for his Son, Jesus (Ephesians 5:25–27).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is from our perspective the link between the risen Christ and the Church. It is ironic that so much confusion exists over the Holy Spirit when He is the person of the Trinity with whom we interact the most. The Spirit is the least mentioned member of the Trinity.

The message of the Bible, The Creed and our fundamental truths is a message that;

- The Holy Spirit is God.
- The Holy Spirit is a Person.
- The Holy Spirit Provides Empowerment.
- The Holy Spirit Purifies.