



THE FAITH WE SHARE

A STUDY OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

Week Six: "I believe in the Holy Spirit..." John 14: 15-27, Romans 8: 15-17, 26-27

Opening Question: Talk about a favorite teacher you have had in your life. When did you know them? What did you love about them? Was there something important they taught you that you still carry with you?

CONTEXT

A quick look back: What has stood out to you from the first five weeks of our study about either the Creed itself or what we have learned about who God is? In what ways have you experienced any signs of resurrection in your life or in creation in the past week?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

Today's Passage: Today in the Creed we turn to the person of the Spirit. Unlike the other two sections, our introduction to the Spirit comes with no other descriptive words. But Scripture is rich in describing the deep gifts and promises that come with the person of the Spirit. Today we will use two passages to explore this richness. The first passage is from the gospel of John and sits us right at the feet of Jesus as he tenderly speaks to his disciples in one of his last moments with them before his arrest and crucifixion. In these last words, Jesus gives his disciples the sure promise that even though he is about to leave their physical sight, in the Spirit they will never, ever be without him. The second passage comes from the book of Romans, where Paul makes it clear that the "God in us" gives us a sure identity as sons and daughters. And that as His children, the Spirit gives us everything we need to talk to our "Abba"- our Daddy- in the language of prayer.

CONTENT

Read John 14: 15-27 and Romans 8: 15-17, 26-27 out loud and then pick ONE of the following ways (Option A, B, or C) to help your group engage with these passages.

Option A. Notice/Wonder: Ask everyone to read the passage again quietly on their own. As they read, ask them to make a list like the one below. Remember that what people notice or wonder can just be small, simple things.

What do I NOTICE about this text? What do I WONDER about?

Once everyone has had the chance to make their list, come together as a group to share and discuss your observations, writing them in a place where everyone can see the list as it develops.

Option B. Creative Engagement: Give everyone paper and drawing supplies. Have everyone read the passage again on their own, then invite them to spend some time illustrating the passage (or a part of the passage) in whatever way they want- concrete, abstract, colors, images, lists, words. When everyone has completed their art, come together to share and discuss what you drew and why.

Option C. Guided Bible Study Questions:

John 14: 15-27

1. Which parts of the Spirit's work or character stand out to you in these verses?
2. Look at all the descriptions of Jesus' "closeness" in this passage (vs 17, 18, 20, 23). How close does Jesus come in the person of the Spirit?
3. In vs 15, 21, and 23, Jesus says that our LOVE for him will naturally lead to what?
4. Related to the question above, love for Jesus means that we care about what he says. That we form our lives in obedience around his words, his teachings, his heart, his commands. In vs 26, how does the Spirit help us do this?
5. In vs 27, what does Jesus promise he will give us? What does he contrast this gift with?

Romans 8: 15-17, 26-27

1. In vs 15-17, what is the main purpose of the Spirit? What word does the Spirit put in our mouths to cry out? Does your Bible give any more information on this word? Think of ALL the words we could cry out to God- why is this one so important?
2. In vs 26-27, how is the Spirit involved in our prayer life? What does the Spirit know and intercede for perfectly?

APPLICATION

How does all of this connect to our lives? Here are some questions to help guide your discussion. Choose one or several.

- Jesus promises in John that the peace we receive from the Spirit is nothing like what the world can give us. Talk about this idea. What kinds of messages, images, goals, or ideas is the world giving you in your life right now? How are they distinctly different from peace?
- The disciples are about to walk through one of the most difficult things in their lives- watching Jesus suffer and die and wondering if the whole story is over. And even after Jesus' resurrection, almost all of them are going to endure their own share of hardship because of their faith. And yet in the Spirit, Jesus says they WILL have peace. How would you define the kind of peace Jesus is talking about? Have you ever experienced a sense of peace at a time when peace was totally unexpected?
- Some Christian denominations emphasize the work, influence, worship and person of the Spirit while others hardly emphasize the Spirit at all. Talk about your background and faith tradition- how much about the Spirit did you hear, learn, or encounter in worship? Why do you think there are differences around our knowledge or attention to the Spirit in faith communities?
- What does it mean to you to be a child of God? How might that be different than thinking of yourself as a follower of God?
- Romans says that even when we don't know what to say in prayer, the Spirit is at work. Talk about this idea. How does this change or not change the way you think about prayer? Is prayer hard for you, intimate, complicated, life-giving? What does it mean to have a Spirit who groans for you- who takes your heartache or silence or things too hard to say and places them perfectly before God?

PRAYER

Close your time together in prayer using one of the ideas below

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Raise up your "wonderings" from the notice/wonder section to God in prayer
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Use this prayer excerpt taken from "**A Liturgy When I Feel Peaceful**" by Anjuli Paschall, from her book *Feel*.

I dwell in the peace you have given me, God.

Your peace is behind me and before me.

Your peace is now and forever.

I ponder the Trinity of peace between You- Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You are a God of peace.

I will forever praise You. Peace fills my soul.

I am well. I am awake. I am loved.

Amen.