

Fil-Am Community Church

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LAST BUT NOT THE LEAST

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment”

(John 16:7-10)

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

(John 14:16)

Good morning! As we continue with our series on The Apostles' Creed, let me give a quick summary of how the Creed is structured.

The Apostle's Creed is divided into three major parts. The first part expresses what we believe about God the Father, the second states what we believe about God the Son, and the third is what we believe about the Holy Spirit. It affirms our faith in God the Father, as “almighty” and the “Creator of heaven and earth.” The Creed then goes on to affirm our faith in God's “only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at

the right hand of the God the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.” It delivers quite a comprehensive statement about the Son of God, but when the creed comes to the third person of the Trinity we simply say, “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” That’s it. No follow-up statements. It’s like it was tacked on there just to complete the Trinity. Perhaps it is indicative of how bewildered we are about just who the Holy Spirit is and what place he holds.

That’s why he has been given certain unflattering titles like the Forgotten God or the Other Guy or the Shy member of the Trinity.

If we’re honest enough, many of us really don’t know who the Holy Spirit is. Or even what he does. What is his role in the Trinity? One thing is clear: he may be mentioned last always in the Godhead formula – The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit – but he certainly is not the least. By the way, I don’t have enough time to talk about in a comprehensive manner the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

For example, I’m not going to tackle the gifts of the Holy Spirit, like the gift service, the gift of mercy, the gift of teaching, evangelism, etc. or even the spectacular gifts like the gift of healing or speaking in tongues, prophecy, and so forth. This morning, I’d like to share with you who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. First, let us talk about the Person of the Holy Spirit.

So, first of all, we need to understand that:

1. The Holy Spirit is a person.

The Holy Spirit is not a thing, or an it. He is not merely a force, a power, or a phantom. That’s one of the things that many cults in

Christianity teach. And that would be your conclusion if you don't believe in the Trinity. Or it could be the other way around. If you don't believe in the Holy Spirit as a person, then consequently you wouldn't believe in the Trinity. You see, they go together. If you believe in the Trinity, it follows that you believe in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Anyway, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of our Holy God. But he is a separate person and yet one with the Godhead — the Trinity. He expresses all the aspects of the wonderful personality and being of God. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin, helps us to repent, thrills us with the new birth and fills us with the indwelling presence of God. He guards us, encourages us, strengthens and empowers us to live for God. He protects and sustains us spiritually.

While Christ was on earth he was only able to be in one place at one time. He was limited, but he knew that when he left the world he would send his Spirit into the world to minister effectively and personally to everyone on the face of the earth. Let me read to you again what Jesus said to his disciples, *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-17).* So, the Spirit of Christ comes to us in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

Now, why do we say that the Holy Spirit is a person? Because the Bible says he can be lied to (Act 5), that he can be resisted (Act 7), that he can be obeyed (Acts 10),

that he intercedes in prayer for followers of Jesus (Romans 8) and that his feelings can be hurt (Ephesians 4). Can you hurt a force like electricity? No, you can't. But electricity can hurt you, right? And your electric bill can hurt your pocket as well. That's being corny but you get my point, right?

So, the Holy Spirit is a person. But not just any kind of person.

Because

2. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity.

Meaning, he is God himself. He is as fully God as God the Father and God the Son are. We know this, number one, because every attribute that the Bible attributes to God, the Bible also credits to the Holy Spirit. For example, the Bible declares that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent in Psalm 139, that he is omnipotent in Isaiah 40, that he is omniscient and knows the deep things of God that only God knows in 1 Cor. 2, that he is sovereign in 1 Cor. 12.

What's more, number two, is that all the works the Bible attributes to God and God alone, the Bible also attributes to the Holy Spirit. For example, the Bible says the Holy Spirit took part in the creation of the world (Genesis 1), that he took part in the writing of the Bible (1 Peter 1), and that he was responsible for the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1). All of these things are things that the Bible says God alone did, and the Bible also says the Holy Spirit did them.

This explains why Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,"—watch—" baptizing them in the

name”—singular—“of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Notice the word name is singular, because there is only one God, but notice that this God exists in three equal persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirits. So now, we know who the Holy Spirit is. Let us now talk about the work of the Holy Spirit. Regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, number one, the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts people, who convinces people that they’re sinners and that they’re facing the judgment of God.

Number two, the Holy Spirit is the one who regenerates us into being followers of Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again by the Holy Spirit”.

When Billy Graham conducted his crusade in 1949 in Los Angeles, there was this radio personality who was considered number one in his field. His name was Stuart Hamblen.

Before he met Graham, Hamblen didn't cope well with the pressures of his high profile career and sought relief in alcohol. Many times his drinking landed him in jail for public brawling and other destructive behavior. The Texas State Historical Association reports that Hamblen identified himself as the "original juvenile delinquent." Because Hamblen was hugely popular, his radio sponsors regularly bailed him out of jail and smoothed things over. For a while, he ventured into horse-racing as an owner. Inevitably, Hamblen's drinking and gambling problems severely affected his life and career. Until he encountered the powerful preaching of Billy Graham in his

1949 crusade. What happened was that he decided to attend the crusade one night. Afterwards, he went home greatly feeling convicted about his sinful life. At the crusade, he didn't go forward during the invitation. But now, he was feeling greatly convicted by the Holy Spirit. It was raining hard that night, but he knew he had to receive Christ and yet he didn't know how. He found out where Billy Graham was staying and he drove to his apartment. He knocked loudly at Billy Graham's apartment and the door opened and he asked Billy how he can get saved. Billy wanted to test him whether that's what he really wanted and he hadn't just been drinking. And so, Billy declined and asked him to leave and he closed the door. But Stuart Hamblen felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit so deeply that he banged loudly at the door once more and begged for Billy help him be saved. This time, Billy let him in and in his apartment living room, led this guy to Jesus. After his conversion, Hamblen was soon fired from his radio program after he refused to do beer commercials.

He subsequently gave up gambling and horse racing, and entered Christian broadcasting with his radio show The Cowboy Church of the Air, which ran until 1952.

Folks, that's the Holy Spirit's power in turning sinners into new creatures in Jesus.

Number three, the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us assurance of our salvation.

Number four, the Holy Spirit is the person of the Godhead who indwells every believer.

Number five, the Holy Spirit is the one who illuminates our minds and our hearts, so that we can understand the written Word of God.

Number six, the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us spiritual gifts to serve and the supernatural power to use them effectively.

Number seven, the Holy Spirit is the one who comforts us in the trials of life.

Number eight, the Holy Spirit is the one who restrains evil in the world, Satan himself, so that the work of God can move forward in the world.

Number nine, the Holy Spirit is God's down payment on us as followers of Jesus Christ.

Now that's as far as we want to go in the theological treatment of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, because now we want to ask our most important question.

What does all this mean to me today? It means all the world to you. You may not realize it, but the ministry of the Holy Spirit is very practical in your life today. And so, let me give you Number ten, the Holy Spirit is the person who lives the Christian life through us as followers of Christ. What this means is that, it is the indwelling of the

Holy Spirit that helps you to live a victorious life despite your sinful body.

Galatians 5:17 says, “For our sinful nature desires what is contrary to God’s Spirit, and God’s Spirit desires what is contrary to our sinful nature. These two forces are in conflict with each other, so that we often do not do what we wish.”

But just listen to so many Christians talk when they’re struggling in their Christian lives. Listen to what they say. They go, “Oh man, my Christian life’s really not going well. Do you know what? I need to read the Bible more. I need to pray more. I need to go to church more. I need to fellowship more.” When we say that, we may not realize it, but what we are really saying is that we are relying on these religious works. We’re relying on them to give us the abundant Christian life instead of relying on the Holy Spirit to do it.

I read the story of this lady who confessed to her pastor, “You know, my dad would go into his room and spend two hours having quiet time. Then he would walk immediately out of the room and blow his stack at mom, at me and the other kids.” All right, so what did this gentleman need? Another two hours of quiet time? No? Listen, the Christian life is a supernatural life. It is a life characterized by supernatural joy, by supernatural peace, by supernatural patience, by supernatural self-control, by supernatural love, and supernatural boldness in witnessing.

What do we need to do then? To answer that, let me talk now about the relevance of the Holy Spirit in our lives today. You see, the best thing we can do to produce the Christian life inside of us is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as he tries to make us bear his fruit in our lives. And what is this fruit? Gal. 5:22 says, *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* And I don’t want you to miss the following verses, *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”*

Keep in step, that’s the key. Don’t miss a step in your Christian journey. Don’t fall behind or get ahead or turn to the right or left. Keep in step with the Holy Spirit!