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# The Apostles Creed Week 4

## Holy Spirit, Church and Forgiveness

Today we're into the final part of our series on the Apostles Creed

*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.*

You may have noticed that there is a flow to the Apostles Creed:

Firstly, who God IS...

- I believe in God the Father,
- I believe in Jesus Gods only Son and this week,
- And today, I believe in the Holy Spirit.

## Holy Spirit

Today we complete that section about God with "I believe in The Holy Spirit".

Even today some people are bewildered, perplexed, amazed, and some are sceptical, of the Holy Spirit in effect saying, as was said on the day of Pentecost

*"they've had too much wine" (v. 13).*

However, as scripture itself proclaims the Holy Spirit is a long-awaited gift.

The Spirit was always with and around God's people.

While the Spirit would rest on particular people for particular purposes... the prophet Joel also prophesied that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all Gods people, young and old, men and women. (Joel 2)

This Holy Spirit is not some sort of impersonal, mysterious force, or forces, not an energy, but a person, one person, equal to the Father and the Son.

That's why we say THE Holy Spirit.

There is only ONE Spirit, and he is not only from God, but IS God,

- who was involved in the act of creation, who testifies about Jesus,
- inspired those to write about God,
- led the prophets to speak,
- gives gifts to those who believe.
- Who along with the Father and Son, HAS always existed
- and WILL always exist.

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For all who trust in Jesus today, they too receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- For some that will be like a roaring wind, for others it will be like a gentle breeze.
- But it doesn't matter which because it means that our relationship with God is so intimate, that he takes up residence in us!

The same POWER that raised Jesus from the dead is alive in every believer.

- STITCHING us together, with Jesus and one another, as ONE BODY
- SHAPING us, doing a work of new creation in us, with gifts and in Christ's likeness,
- SENDING us into the world to proclaim the Good News.

However, the Holy Spirit is not just a personal gift. There is a fundamental and essential link between the Holy Spirit and the CHURCH... More about that shortly.

The second part movement of the Apostles creed is contained in today's segment and addresses who His people are:

- the holy catholic Church,
- the communion of saints,
- the forgiveness of sins,
- the resurrection of the body,
- and the life everlasting.

For some people, it's this part of the Creed that leaves them confused or concerned, wondering what these things are.

It's in this part of the Creed, in response to who God is and what he has done, that we really come to grips with what it means to be a people, his people, who are shaped not by our own agenda, but the very agenda of God.

## The Church

When we say this part of the creed - holy catholic Church - each word is critical.

### ***Holy***

In Jesus there is:

- One faith
- One Spirit
- One church

The gospel message is clear:

- everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

That's our purpose. We are to keep on pointing people to Jesus, who in turn will point people to Jesus. Not for our glory, but for God's glory.

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## ***Catholic***

The word catholic in the creed means 'according to the whole' or 'universal', it is not a reference to the Roman Catholic church, which did not even exist when this was written.

## ***Church***

CHURCH refers not to a building but to a people.

When we see letters written in the New Testament, addressed to the church in Corinth, it's not talking about the place where they meet, but the collection of Jesus people in that place.

The word for church, often used in the New Testament, literally means, those – using a plural tense - who have been called out.

Because we have such an individualised culture, I think we're on a back-foot when we try to really understand what it means to be a people, a fellowship, a community of God's called out persons.

Sometimes we can obsess about what separates us, but the Scriptures are clear: that for all who trust in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, we are one.

If a church worships a different way, but the same Lord, then we are indeed unified, and it is the quality of our relationships that needs to catch up that Godly truth.

As that ONE CHURCH, it is the same single Holy Spirit who thrusts us into action through the work of the Great Commission.

That's why Jesus' command to go and make disciples must be the primary focus of every local church.

## **Forgiveness**

*We believe in "the forgiveness of sins".*

If you believe in forgiveness you logically believe that **sin is real**.

The world around does us not believe in absolutes, everything is relative...that means no absolute or universal truths, only degrees of truth.

So, sin rather than an absolute, has become a diluted word,

- kept for the worst of actions.
- reserved for those who have committed the most serious transgressions,
- not the average person who tries to be a good person and
- falls a little short of the mark.

However, the scriptures present a different view.

*"all have fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:22-23).*

Sin is real, and sin has real effects.

The power of sin is that it can be overwhelming.

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But the good news is that God is kind and merciful and doesn't give us the punishment we deserve. Forgiveness is possible because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

- We do not deserve forgiveness,
- we cannot earn forgiveness and
- we cannot buy forgiveness.
- God's forgiveness is an expression of his love for you.
- Even though we sin, God is faithful and forgives.

We love because God first loved us. We are generous in response to God's generosity to us.

And, in response to God's forgiveness, we are called to forgive those who sin against us. God is our model for forgiveness.

- God forgives us even though we don't deserve it.
- God forgives us even though it is costly to God.

If we cannot forgive those who wrong us, then perhaps we haven't fully appreciated the extent of God's forgiveness to us.

There are some misunderstandings about forgiveness...

- Forgiveness doesn't make what has happened disappear.
- Forgiveness does not make what happened to you acceptable or right.
- Forgiveness does not remove the need for accountability.
- Forgiveness doesn't require the restoration of relationships.
- Forgiveness is not permission to continue to hurt or harm another person.

## Resurrection and the life everlasting

Last week I spoke at some length about the fact and the truth of the resurrection.

This is the hope and the purpose of our salvation....

- Not that we are saved for a better life here...
- But that we are saved for a perfect life in eternity.

That, like all of God's promises, will be realised at the proper time and every day in this life is a day closer to that life.

Until that day comes this world is for so many a dark place and you and the Holy Spirit that resides in you are able to shine THE LIGHT that drives away the darkness.

So, if you truly believe the words of the creed...

- Declare the love of God every day, and
- Display the love of God every day...

## Until the last day!