THE CREED: I BELIEVE IN the holy spirit

Apr-Jun 2017

**about these notes**

Although I hope that they will be useful also to individuals, these notes are intended to assist disciple group leaders as they prepare to lead a session for their group. They will serve you best if you DO NOT SIMPLY SIT AND READ THEM TO YOUR GROUP. I am anticipating that the leader will look at them prayerfully in advance of the session, using them as a prompt or guide to your discussions according to the particular circumstances of your groups. I hope that they will prove useful as you invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into a deeper knowledge of what Jesus wants for your lives.

**Introduction to the series**

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| 23rd April**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Life-giving Spirit** | 30th April**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Spirit of Truth** | 7th May**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Spirit of Unity** |
| Ezekiel 37, 1 Cor 15:35-end | John 15:26-7, 16:12-15 | Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13, John 17:20-23 |

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| 14th May**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Gift-giving Spirit 1** | 21st May**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Gift-giving Spirit 2** | 28th May**I believe in the Son:** **Who ascended into heaven** | 4th June**I believe in the Holy Spirit:** **Who wants us to be filled** |
| 1 Corinthians 12:1-8 | Romans 12:3-8 | John 17:1-11 | John 7:37-9, Ephesians 5:18-20 |

The Nicene Creed

**WE BELIEVE** in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

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.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

1. Spirit of Truth

**John 15:26-7, 16:12-15**

**15 26**‘When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me. **27**And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

**1612**‘I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **13**But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **14**He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. **15**All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.’

**GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED**

These questions can be used as ice-breakers in the beginning OR interwoven between the

questions below to draw the group into the discussion.

* What is truth?
* What things do people most commonly chase after to seek meaning or truth in their lives today?
* What would you say is the most valuable thing for somebody to know? Why?

**Questions for your group**

Before looking at this week’s verses, take a moment to read the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus before Jesus’ crucifixion in John 18:33-38. Pilate ends the dialogue with a question that would fit well in any discussion of post-modernist thought.

* + **Discuss in your group the implications of discarding the biblical notion of absolute truth.**

The atheist philosopher, Nietzsche, suggested that if there is no God, then anything goes (and the Nazi regime picked up on his world view). Likewise, in Ecclesiastes, King Solomon explored what life would look like ‘under the sun’ (in other words, without reference to God), concluding that life would be ‘utterly meaningless’ (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

Read John 14:26, John 15:26

* + **Given that this series is exploring the words of the Creed, what do these words of Jesus tell us about who has sent the Holy Spirit?**
	+ **Why have they sent the Spirit?**

[to guide us into all truth - i.e. so that we can come to understand meaning or truth in our lives]

The Holy Spirit is called the Counsellor and the Spirit of Truth in these verses. The Greek word translated as ‘Counsellor’ in the NIV is actually *parakletos*, meaning literally the one who comes alongside.

* + **Discuss the significance of these particular titles and roles given to the Holy Spirit.**

[until we receive and allow the Holy Spirit to come alongside us and to guide us, we won’t recognise either the truth itself or the joy of discovering its full significance. Instead, we’ll be consigned to walking around in the darkness, lost, unable to find any meaning or value in our lives]

Our culture today tends to reduce the concept of ‘truth’ into abstract formulae or statements of ‘fact’ relating to mechanism or physical composition. This type of truth is handled by the left side of our brains, but we have been given two sides to our brains, and the right side of our brains is designed to process and grasp context, or relationship. The abstract ‘facts’ so loved by the left side of our brains only actually take on true meaning when they are placed back into their proper context or relationship.

* + **When Jesus introduces the Holy Spirit as a person who will lead us into all truth, which aspect of ‘truth’ do you think he is telling us has the greater priority?**

[relational - i.e. the personal, relational and spiritual context to our lives]

Factual knowledge is undoubtedly a good thing, but few people rock themselves to sleep at night because they can’t prove Einstein’s theory of special relativity, and yet millions of people rock themselves to sleep at night because they don’t know that they’re loved. It’s no accident that the Bible tells us that God is love: He gives us the wider relational context that confers true meaning to every other fragment of truth that we may discover.

Read John 14:6

* + **Where does Jesus tell us that we will find truth?**

Jesus tells us that he is ‘the way and the truth’, and that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. read John 14:26 again.

* + **How does the Holy Spirit point us towards the truth?**

[He inspired the writing of the four Gospels which testify to Jesus (John 15:26)]

Read John 16:12

* + **How did the Holy Spirit tell us more than the disciples were ready to hear from Jesus himself?**

[He inspired the writing of the epistles and the remainder of the New Testament]

Read John 16:13

* + **How did the Holy Spirit tell us what is yet to come?**

[Most clearly in the book of Revelation, but also in revealing to us what had been hidden through the whole sweep of Scripture - The Creed says…*he has spoken through the prophets*. He inspired them to write at the time, and he reveals the deeper meaning of their words through the lens of Jesus when we read them today. John 17:17 - God’s word is truth]

Spend time talking in your group about the implications of the work of the Holy Spirit guiding us into all truth.

 [If it doesn’t arise otherwise, try to draw into the conversation that coign to know ‘truth’ at a personal level means taking to our hearts the most incredible personal reality that God showed his unconditional love to us when - in Jesus - he submitted to death on the cross in our place. There is no greater joy than knowing that we are loved unconditionally in that way - it’s far more significant at a personal level than any intellectual head knowledge, as it tells us at a heart level of the bigger picture - the true context for our existence.]

* + **What impact does the Holy Spirit have on us as he leads us into this truth?**

[when we embrace it, completely transforms us, bringing us to our knees, melting us and bringing tears to our eyes when we realise just how much we are loved, and just how much God has done to bring us back to him, gradually moulding and shaping us into the sort of people who reflect God’s glory and bring praise to him.]

**ALLOW TIME FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK AMONGST YOU.**