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 12:1-11 | 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.

4. Gift-giving Spirit

**1 corinthians 12:1-11**

**12**Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2**You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to dumb idols. **3**Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.

**4**There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. **5**There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. **6**There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

**7**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8**To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9**to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10**to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. **11**All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

**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.

**Questions for your group**

Emma talked about there being barriers or reasons to why we are sometimes guarded or suspicious of the work of the Holy Spirit (for example, for her it was talking about the Holy ‘Ghost’ in Church when she was a child).

* Do you have any particular barriers or prejudices that might be holding you back from embracing what the Holy Spirit wants to do in your life?

In Corinth the new believers were very familiar with the spiritual world. We now live in an age where anything termed “supernatural” is bracketed as weird and wacky, and we live in danger of confining ourselves to the current world view where everything must have a mundane, down-to-earth explanation to be accepted.

* How are we missing out if we align ourselves with this world view?

Just as we are uniquely created by a loving God - with spiritual gifting it is not “one size fits all” - we are all gifted in different ways, so we can work together to build the body of Christ. Read on through to the end of the Chapter (12) to encourage one another that in our diversity there is unity.

* Can you think of any examples where you have seen the gifting of various people compliment one another?

Two weeks ago Justin used the brilliant analogy of his lawnmower - how he slogged away in his own strength pushing his mower up and down… until two years later he realised there was a self-drive lever and the lawn mower powered itself.

* Sometimes we find ourselves slogging away in our own life - are there area of your lives where you feel bogged down … could the Holy Spirit help free you from this in some way?

To many - including the little boy who James questioned at St Mary’s Primary School, Church looks “boring” - the Spirit brings life to the church, when the Spirit fills us and and our gifts are released in it full diversity and colour then the Church comes to life and transformation begins…

* How can you see this happening. Dream .. what effect will this have on or town and nation?
* Are there people in your group who feel inadequate, or not worthy of receiving from God?

Remind them that Paul makes it abundantly clear that there is no need for our own ability (there is no test or age of maturity) we just have to make ourselves available - reflect on stories in the Bible where this is the case (the women at the well, David and Goliath [1 Samuel 17]…). Pray for those individuals who struggle in this area.

* Can you think think of examples in your life where you have felt that the gifts of the Spirit have been at work? It may help you to think of them more individually:

The gift of wisdom

The gift of knowledge

The gift of faith

The gift of healing

The gift of prophecy

The gift of tongues

The gift of interpretation

Spiritual gifts are realised within a real partnership with God: in fact it is more like 1% us stepping out and 99% God stepping in. We CANNOT do it without him and evidently, most often, He will NOT do it without us. John Wimber, who led a great move of the spirit in the 1980s explained how he operated:

*“Many of you want to know the secret of how I operate in spiritual gifts. I will tell you right now exactly how I do it… as soon as you walk out of this session watch for any situation in which you feel that God wants you to join him. Whether is a simple act of kindness or a prayer… and after that look for the next situation that seem to you to be one that God cares about - and so the same thing, and again and again…”*

Take a look at your life - what ever stage you are at - and think where could you make room to do this:

* how could you step out of your comfort zone?

(for Emma this was a simple decision to pray on her way to the supermarket asking for opportunities for conversations)

Share you ideas, pray for one another … and why not reflect on how this has gone next week.

Verse 31, Paul tells us to “eagerly desire” these gifts - it would be great if you could spend some time as a group asking the Lord to bless you with those gifts that will make you unique.

ALLOW TIME FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK AMONGST YOU -

Here is a link to the a song you might want to play for reflection time

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMJne6wUoag>

May I take this opportunity to encourage you if you feel that you have stepped out in faith this week and seen God at work - if you have a testimony that you feel would encourage the Church family and bring glory to God then we would love you to contact Rachael Bell (churchillheath@mac.com) or James (vicar@stmaryscnorton.com).