



Looking Inwards (15 mins)
Caring For Each Other

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins)
Concern For Others

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

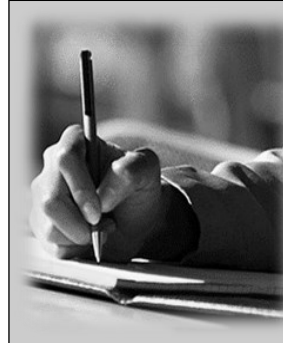


HG166 *The Apostles Creed: I Believe In ...*
The Holy Spirit

Isaiah 61:1-13 & Acts 3:1-10

Home Group Study Notes

10 June 2018 - Pauline Woolnough



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.



Welcome (10 mins)
Ice Breaker

Share with one another experiences you have of the Holy Spirit working in your life.



Looking Upwards (10 mins)
Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...

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Part of The Billericay & Little Burstard Team Ministry



HG166 *The Apostles Creed: I Believe In ...*
The Holy Spirit

Isaiah 61:1-13 & Acts 3:1-10

Home Group Sermon

10 June 2018 - Pauline Woolnough

Introduction We know a lot about God the Father, even more about God the Son but God the Holy Spirit on the other hand is less well known, for many of us he is the God we hardly know at all. Two powerful lines in the Apostles Creed are devoted to God, and 10 lines are devoted to Jesus but it is rather scant on detail about the Holy Spirit, in fact there is only one line given to Him, and that line is not very descriptive - the creed simply says - *"I believe in the Holy Spirit."* Its not much to go on, but if we read back to what the creed says about Jesus we see that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, it was the Holy Spirit that gave Him life, so there is a connection between the life of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and if we read on to the other beliefs in the creed we see that they flow on from the phrase, *"I believe in the Holy Spirit"* indicating that what comes next, is also connected to the work of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who empowers the church, unites believers, forgives and regenerates sinners. He breathes resurrection life into lifeless souls and he sustains us in the life everlasting. On the day of Pentecost the church was formed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Peter preached a sermon exalting Christ. The Spirit and the Word came together and 3000 people were saved. In the space of 30 years from AD 33-AD 64 the church was born and became the largest religion the world has ever seen because the Holy Spirit breathed life into a handful of men and women. So while we may not learn very much about the Holy Spirit in this one line from the Apostles Creed, much of what we affirm in the creed is only made possible because of Him.

Who is the Holy Spirit? First of all he is a Person, the third Person of the Trinity and along with the Father and the Son has been around since before the beginning of time. The first time we encounter him is right at the very beginning in Gen Ch 1v 2 which tells us that, *"The earth was empty, a formless mass cloaked in darkness. And the Spirit of God was hovering over its surface. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light."*

The Holy Spirit caused things to come into being and he brought order out of chaos." He has a unique ministry and all the characteristics of personhood. He thinks, (Acts 15:28), he speaks (Acts 1:16), he leads (Romans 8:14), he can be grieved because he is very sensitive (Eph 4:30). He is sometimes referred to as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, (Romans 8:9) or the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7). Jesus told his disciples that when he left them the Father would send them *"another Advocate,"* (Jn 14:16), the word for *another* means "of the same kind" so what Jesus is saying is that the Holy Spirit is just like him, he is just like Jesus and also that he will teach us, *"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom*

4. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 2 Timothy 1:14. What difference does your belief that the Holy Spirit lives in you make to your daily life?

5. The lame man expected something from Peter and John and he gave Peter his attention. What expectations do we have when we meet and how much of our attention do we actually give God?

6. The Holy Spirit is very sensitive and can be grieved. In what ways do you think we could grieve him?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. What image comes to mind when you hear the phrase, “the Holy Spirit”?

2. Read John 3:8 Acts 2:3-4 and 1 Cor 12:13. What do these pictures of the Holy Spirit as wind, water and fire tell us about him and what he does.?

3. Some people are wary of the Holy Spirit and are concerned that he may bring a level of emotionalism that we may find uncomfortable. How do you feel about that and do you think we make him welcome enough?

the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” Jn 14:26 . At the birth of Jesus virtually all connected with his birth were filled with the Spirit and Jesus predicted in Acts 1.8 that the believers would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them and on the last day of pentecost, He came and stayed. Acts 2.2

Power is in the Name of Jesus In today's reading, Acts 3 1-10, we see the apostles continuing in the ministry of Jesus in word and deed. The healing of the lame man leads to the preaching of the word and many people were converted to faith and saved. At the end of Acts 2 we are told that the church met together sharing and praying and God did amazing things, it was a time full of miracles, signs and wonders. These miracles were not merely power displays, they validated the apostles teaching and served the message of the Good News.

The story of a lame man being healed is one such great miracle and of course its not Peter or John who healed the lame man it was Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit at work in them. Peter says in v 16, *“The name of Jesus has caused this healing before your very eyes.”* and its a fulfilment of a promise Jesus gave hundreds of years ago in Is 35:5-6 when Isaiah talks about the Messiah and says, *“And when he comes he will open up the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap and those who cannot speak will shout and sing”* Jesus quotes again from Isaiah when he starts out in ministry and he says from Is 61 our other reading today, *“The Spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me.”* Isaiah was referring to a future messianic age and Jesus announces to the people in Luke 4 that Isaiah's prophecy had come true before their eyes as he stood and quoted the Isaiah passage and proclaimed himself as the one who would bring this good news

Day in day out the lame beggar sat outside the temple at a gate called the Beautiful gate. He wasn't allowed in because he was lame. It was customary for people who were disabled to sit outside the temple and beg, they would be carried there each day by friends or family members and sit there hoping that the people going in to the temple for prayer would give them money for food. There were 3 disciplines that the Jew followed, praying, fasting and giving alms to the poor and there were 3 times set aside for the faithful to pray. 9 o'clock 12 o'clock and 3 o'clock. This man was always sitting in the same place every day, Peter and John would have seen him many other times on their way to pray, but this time was different because *they* were different. In the last chapter, Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit preached and 3000 were saved, now we see Jesus's care for the individual as the Holy Spirit works in Peter and John and the lame man was healed.

If Peter and John had seen this man before its entirely possible that Jesus had too, he may have healed others in the near vicinity, why not this man? He was a well known character sitting outside the Beautiful Gate and yet Jesus may have walked on past him. Miracles were taking place around him yet the man is not healed, he may even have seen them happen, yet Jesus walks by. We may even feel like that ourselves at times when others tell us of how God has worked in their lives and we are left thinking, why not me Lord? This man can say something to us about unanswered prayer. We will never understand why God heals some and not others, all we know is that even Jesus only did what the Father told him to do, he says in Jn 5 19, *“I assure you the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing”*

Everything is under the sovereign will of the Father. God has his reasons for doing what he does, we cannot understand. Joni Eareckson Tada the quadriplegic lady who has honoured God all over the world by her testimony of Jesus Christ perhaps has more reason than many to wonder why God has not answered prayer to heal her yet she says, *“I am not a Christian because of what he does for me; I am a Christian because its true.”*

The Man had Expectations The man held out his hand hoping to receive some money and Peter prompted by the Holy Spirit, stopped and he said, *“Look at me.”* The man wanted and expected to be given money. He hadn't asked to be healed and his healing had nothing to do with his measure of faith or piety. It was not about Peter's faith either and Peter affirmed this when he said to the crowd later, *“why look at us as though we had made this man walk through our own power and godliness?”* v 12. It was through the Holy Spirit at work in Peter that the faith to heal came. Peter said he would give the man what he had and what he had was faith that Jesus had given him to speak the words, *“get up and walk, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”* We sometimes think that our prayers for healing go unanswered due to our lack of faith or because we are not worthy of healing but that is wrong. The man received his miracle because Jesus decided to intervene there and then. Sometimes we ask God for something but He may say he's got something else, something better so don't be surprised when he gives you what you really need. God invites us to pray and he hears our prayers and answers them either now or at the resurrection and ultimately all his people will be healed.

The Word and the Spirit Together At the end of our passage today after the man was healed he *“was walking and jumping and praising God”* and the people who saw what had happened were amazed. If we had read on we would see that Peter did not let this opportunity pass him by. He didn't take any credit and boast about his part in the miracle, instead he grasped the opportunity and he preached on the life death and resurrection of Jesus and reminded them that they had chosen a murderer rather than the “author of life.” Peter preached the Gospel. The Word and the Spirit came together. Paul says in Romans 1.16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek.”* The gospel is the power of God, the power of God is the Holy Spirit of God so the assumption is that the gospel message is the message that the Holy Spirit will anoint. He only anoints the truth and the mention of the Blood of Christ is what gets the Holy Spirit's attention.

The Good News is that Jesus came and died for us so that our sins may be forgiven when we believe in Him and accept him as our Saviour. We are saved by the Blood of Christ through the saving grace of the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit, that is the Gospel, the Good News message, and the Holy Spirit cannot resist being around the Good News when it is preached. Jesus came to earth that we might be saved and reconciled to the Father and although he is interested in everything that goes on in our lives, primarily it is our death that most concerns him, where will we go when we die? The Holy Spirit came in order to see the Good News spread and to empower believers to take the message to the ends of the earth. The man was healed that day and his life was transformed physically and spiritually and all the people around who witnessed this miracle were amazed. Peter preached the gospel and he and John were arrested, but many of the people who heard the message believed and the numbers of believers totaled 5000 men, not including the women and children, even children who hear the gospel can understand and believe. Acts 4.4.

Before Jesus came the Hebrews did not understand the Holy Spirit as a Person distinct from the Person of God, they referred to their experiences of him as the expressed power of God, and called him names such as Ruach, meaning breath or wind and this breath or wind was manifested in many different ways. We see him move in certain people especially leaders at certain times for His purposes but the Holy Spirit today now lives in each believer. The lame man had not been allowed into the temple but after Pentecost he didn't need to go in because God had come out, the action was happening outside the temple. We are now the temple of the Living God. The same Holy Spirit lives in every Christian wherever they are, whatever the denomination, background colour or race. The same Spirit is in every child of God and through Him we have access to the presence of God and his power through the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The Reason for the Miracle Miracles cause people to wonder and to look on in awe and in this passage today the miracle of the lame man being healed served the gospel message. It was the launchpad into the sermon and the purpose of the miracle. The miracle attracted a crowd just as Jesus's miracles did and the message that was offered to the crowd was far more important than any miracle or wonder, because although we may be miraculously healed we will one day all die and the message of eternal life is worth far more than a miracle of temporary healing. We must take every opportunity to preach Jesus and share the gospel message with those who do not know him as Saviour. Jesus is the way the truth and the life. He doesn't just show us the way, he *is* the way, he doesn't just speak the truth he *is* the truth he doesn't just tell us about the meaning of life he *is* the life. Paul says in Romans 1.16 that the gospel. *“It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes”*

It's said that there is an old medieval prayer that says *“I want to want you.”* but we want so many things perhaps our modern day prayer should be, *“I want to want to want you.”* When asked in church what we want we say we want more children, a youth club, a curate, we'd be better if we had more volunteers newer songs and shorter sermons. Good as these things are none of these things are what we really need. What we need is more of the Holy Spirit but we need to want him. We have mixed ideas about him though. Some of us are wary, we associate Him with emotionalism, spontaneity and people doing weird things. In reality we could all do with a bit more emotionalism in church, emotionalism is not the problem. Others see Him as the life and soul of the party, he turns up and exciting things happen, gifts and healing are sought and sometimes granted. But the Holy Spirit is at no ones beck and call, he doesn't turn up to make our services more entertaining and remember he is very sensitive, we can upset him, he can be grieved.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit he is our Comforter, Advocate and our Helper and although we rightly look to him to gift us, equip us, to empower us and to bless us, it really is not just all about us. In order to continue to see his church grow and help us reach out and witness to others our prayer needs to be *“I want to want more of the Holy Spirit in order to share the Good News of Jesus to the unsaved.”*

Emmanuel Church Text for 2018

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear,
but you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry ‘Abba Father.’*

Romans 8:15