



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 5

This weekend, Pastor Angela helped us to experience the power of the Holy Spirit which the Apostle's Creed affirms. A belief in the Holy Spirit is a key part of the Christian faith. With the statement of belief in God's Holy Spirit, we can see that God is known to us in three ways. God is Father, God is Son, God is Holy Spirit. God is three-in-one. Pastor Angela's message revealed how the Spirit has been present throughout the whole story, and that after Jesus' ascension, the Spirit of God would empower the believers going forward—and to this very day. May you experience that power as you study and connect with God through the Holy Spirit this week.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this prayer from Pastor Angela or your own prayer.

O God, my Almighty Father, I believe in you. I believe in you, Jesus. I believe you are God's only son. I believe you were conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. I believe you suffered, were crucified, dead, and were buried. I believe you descended to the dead and rose again on the third day. I believe you ascended into heaven and are seated at the Father's right hand. I believe you will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in you, Holy Spirit. And in the Holy Catholic Church. I believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: MATTHEW 3.16-17

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- There are some profound parallels between these verses and the story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. The fullness of God was present in Jesus, and in this moment, the fullness of God was on display

to the witnesses on the ground. Although the term *Trinity* is not mentioned here, as you picture the scene, it is clear that God is three-in-one. How do you picture this moment? What goes through your heart and mind when the voice of God and Spirit of God are surrounding Jesus?

- *God thank you for showing up fully to me. I admit that at times I find you mysterious. I long to live in that place by the waters of baptism. Call me to that place, O God.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 16.7-11

...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:⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me;¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- Surely Jesus' disciples were worried about facing the challenges of the world around them without Jesus after his impending departure. Any confidence they portrayed was because he was out in front of them speaking truth to the brokenness of the world. Now Jesus says he is making way for a more permanent power and guidance through the Spirit. Have you ever wondered who remains to advocate for the truth? Jesus promises that the Advocate will be sent to you.
- *Holy Spirit, speak through me or in spite of me to the brokenness of this world. I depend on you.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 15.26-27

"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.

- If you follow the story of Jesus, you can see how his life and teaching were geared towards empowering his disciples (or apprentices) to carry on and multiply his ministry. If he returns to heaven, and the Spirit comes to us, then we have Spirit-empowered work to do. We are called to testify about Jesus. But we are not alone.
- *Jesus, thank you for preparing the way for the Holy Spirit to do its work in and through me.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 28.16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- The ministry of the disciples going forward would have to expand from observation and formation to the making of more disciples. As more followers of Jesus did this, they baptized new believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—into the fullness of God. The gift of the Spirit is how Jesus fulfills the promise to be with us "to the very end of the age".
- *Jesus, I hear this commission to go and make disciples. With your Spirit as my strength, I commit to witness to my salvation through you.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 1.4-8

On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”⁷ He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- Jesus tells his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. We don't often like to wait on things. But in the waiting, the disciples began to practice the new post-ascension reality. This marks the time when the disciples began to use Spirit language. In the following verses, Peter uses language of the Spirit to put Judas, the fallen disciple, into context. And they select the next disciple to take his place. The Spirit will give you what you need, the Spirit will continue the Jesus-story through you and through the church.
- *God, today I ask for a bigger view and perspective of the work of your Spirit. I am willing to wait for your Spirit to move—and I will follow.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 2.1-4

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

- The day of Pentecost marked the arrival of the Holy Spirit. It showed up in a big way at first and instantly empowered the first disciples to testify and to reach people they otherwise would not have been able to reach with the good news of Jesus Christ. It was probably frightening and thrilling all at the same time. The movement of God had reached a new level of impact and it relied on imperfect disciples to live in the Spirit.
- *God, I know it may be frightening, but send your Spirit to me in a big way. I wait for you. Come and open my mouth to share about Jesus.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Angela said,

“...one of the main purposes of the Holy Spirit is to help us believe. Belief itself is a gift of the Holy Spirit.”

- When do you most struggle with belief? Have you ever considered that the Holy Spirit can help you with that? What practices might help you to allow the Spirit to strengthen your belief?

Angela also shared this quote from author Michael Reeves,

“The warmth of the Spirit’s summer is important, for just as the Spirit makes us warm with life by turning our hearts and their desires to Jesus, so he continues to warm us. The new life the Spirit gives is a life of warmth, for it is his own life of delighting in the Father and the Son, and he rears us up precisely by warming our hearts to them.”

- Do you find it challenging to describe the presence of the Holy Spirit? How do these words from Reeves connect with your understanding of how the Spirit works to guide our hearts?