

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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*I Believe in the Holy Spirit – The
Apostles' Creed, Part 8*

December 3, 2023

Sermon Text: Romans 8 12-16

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:18-32

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

In our consideration of the Apostles' Creed, we come this morning to the fewest words given to the three Persons of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Faith in Him is simply confessed:

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I suggest to you this morning with confidence that a very large portion of what claims to be the Christian church today gives lip service to this truth, but in fact, theirs is a false confession. Why do I say this? Because of this:

2Ti 3:1-5 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, (4) treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) *having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*

What is the role of the Holy Spirit? When we confess that we believe in Him, what are we saying? Are we simply acknowledging that there is a 3rd Person of the Trinity? That there is such a “thing” as the Spirit? No. There has to be more to this *because even the devil can say “I believe in the Holy Spirit”* to that degree.

To confess faith in the Holy Spirit is also to confess *that true religion, real Christianity, is this:*

Rom 2:28-29 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. (29) But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

A true Israelite, a true child of Abraham, that is to say – a true Christian – *is a person who has had a heart transplant, effected by the Holy Spirit.* It is to confess this:

Rom 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the

flesh, sold under sin.

And this:

Eze 36:22-27 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. (23) And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (24) I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. (25) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. (26) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put

my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Jer 31:31-33 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (33) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Joh 3:5-8 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ (8) The wind

blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Understand? To truly confess, without hypocrisy, “*I believe in the Holy Spirit,*” is to confess belief that a Christian, a true child of Abraham, is a new creation, born again by the regenerating miracle effected by the Holy Spirit.

To confess in truth, *I believe in the Holy Spirit,* is to confess that we reject all external counterfeits of Christ’s church:

Mat 23:26-28 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. (27) “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. (28) So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

One of the chief reasons that J.C. Ryle's sermons are so powerful is that he quite often challenged his listeners on this very point – to examine themselves to see if their religion was that of the Spirit of Christ and no merely some external form:

- Are You Born Again?
- Authentic Religion
- Practical Religion – Self Inquiry
- The Power of the Holy Spirit
- The True Church

And many more. Ryle knew, as does any true minister of Christ, that there is an ever-present danger of many people thinking themselves to be right with God and yet their religion is a mere outward form. They are not born again by the Spirit's mighty re-creating power.

Listen to the Apostle Paul once again:

Rom 8:12-16 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. (13)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (14) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

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