

I believe in the Holy Spirit

Romans 8:9-17

Introduction

We are over half-way through our series on the Apostles Creed. The final section of the Creed is a series of short sentences. The first of those is 'I believe in the Holy Spirit'. We will unpack these words by considering one of the Apostle Paul's accounts of the work of Holy Spirit taken from Romans 8.

The Spirit of resurrection

¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[a] his Spirit who lives in you.

The Apostle Paul believes in the reforming power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle believes and teaches that by faith in Jesus Christ we are given resurrection to eternal life. A future to look forward too. But Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit is not just for the ever-after or as some have coined the phrase 'pie in the sky, when you die'. Rather, the power that rose Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit, is at work in us right now, 'giving life to our mortal bodies'.

The Spirit of adoption

¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, 'Abba,^[b] Father.'

When we live with our face turned away from God and our back toward heaven we might live in fear. Fear caused by the unknown, what will happen after I die? Will I meet a God who is disappointed or angry because of the way I have lived my life? The truth is that we don't need to live in fear, the Holy Spirit encourage courageous living. When we surrender our lives to God the Holy Spirit adopts us into God's family, we become a sisters and brothers of Jesus and children of God. Having a Father in heaven provides confidence to live boldly and freely.

Suffering in the Spirit

¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

The Apostle Paul is good at grounding faith in the reality of living. He doesn't shy away from acknowledging that life, even the Christian life, is often peppered with struggle and difficulties. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit often leads us toward struggle rather than away from it. In Luke's Gospel he describes what happens after Jesus' baptism and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. (4:1)

Note that Jesus was *full* of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. (4:14)

Note now that after the struggle of the devil in the desert he is *in the power of the Spirit*.

No one in their right mind looks for suffering. We are naturally averse to suffering and understandably look to avoid it. Yet suffering is unavoidable, some will suffer more, some less but all will suffer, it's part of being human. Even Jesus the perfect man suffered terribly. But the Holy Spirit works in our suffering, if we allow the Spirit to do so, not saving us from it but moulding us into the likeness of Christ through it.

Conclusion

I believe in the Holy Spirit who empowers me through resurrection and adoption. I believe in the Holy Spirit who holds me in suffering.

Connect Group Questions

1. How might we experience the Holy Spirit giving life to our mortal bodies?
2. The Holy Spirit adopts us into God's family, so what is special about your fellow Christians?
3. Suffering is a mark of the Spirit filled life; how might we embrace it?