

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth¹. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ². By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Sing Psalm 33:1

1- *Rejoice ye in the LORD, O righteous,
And let a new song fill the air.
Praise is becoming to the up right;
With harp and lyre His fame declare.
For the LORD has spoken
Words of truth unbroken;
He is faithful still.
Righteousness He treasures;
Earth is with the measures
Of His goodness filled.*

Prayer

- **Doxology:**
- **Worship:**
- **Confession:**

Supplication (for pardon of sins):

- **Thanksgiving:**
- **Intercession (for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)**
- **General supplication:**
- **Illumination of the Holy Spirit (necessary for the ministry of the Word):**

Amen.

Sing Psalm 32:1

1- *Blest is the man whose trespass is forgiven,
Whose sins are covered in the sight of heaven.
Blest is the man against whom, LORD, Thou wilt
Not count all his iniquity and guilt.
How happy he, contrite of heart and lowly,
Who has confessed his sins, O LORD most holy;
Who does not secretly Thy laws transgress,
Whose spirit harbors no deceitfulness.*

Scripture reading:

Text: Luke 11:13 Catechism Lord's Day 20

¹³If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Amongst others, we confess the following in the apostolic confession of faith: ***I believe in the Holy Spirit.***

We also confess the Holy Spirit in the Nicene confession - but more comprehensively:

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 worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

Who or what is the Holy Spirit whom we confess? Where does He come from and what does He do?

¹ Psalm 124:8

² 1 Corinthians 1:3

- For those who have faith the answers are simple.
- For the unbelievers – in other words people in whom the Holy Spirit does not operate - the being and the Deity of the Holy Spirit are unacceptable.

The Being of God is so vast that as humans, we can comprehend precious little thereof. The believer can therefore do naught, but accept, and believe that which God reveals to him in His Word.

What does the Bible reveal to us?

The Bible reveals that the One True God works in three separate Persons. Each Person works in a unique way to affect our redemption

- The Father is Framer and Keeper (Preserver) of His eternal Council.
 - In this council He decides, amongst others, that humans will live to His glory. He decides which people will exist to His glory, and who will not.
- The second Person of the Deity is the Son - the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - He is our Redeemer and Saviour, because He died for us on the cross.
- The third Person of the Deity is the Holy Spirit.

The Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit's work is that He sanctifies die faithful who belong to God. He makes our access to God the Father possible.

¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:16-18 KJV)

This Bible passage clearly reveals how that, by His merit, the Lord Jesus allows our access to God the Father to occur: ... access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:16-18 KJV)

The Holy Spirit leads us to discover ourselves in our sin, so that we may know and seek the mercy of God. We read of this in amongst others, the following passages:

¹¹For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11-12 KJV)

¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. (John 16:13 KJV)

The Holy Spirit is God Himself. Therefore He proceeds from God the Father and from God the Son, to us.

What does He come to do with us?

- He comes to teach us to understand and know God's grace.
- He leads us to be able to apprehend God's grace.

¹⁵For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (Romans 8:15 KJV)

Think also of especially the words written to the congregation at Corinth.

- They are reminded that they were plucked out from the sin of the world, and that is precisely how they no longer have the sinful spirit of the world living inside of them.
- They now have the Spirit, which is of God - which is to say; the Holy Spirit - who lives in them.
- It was the Holy Spirit who taught them to know the grace of God:

¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (1 Corinthians 2:12 KJV)

But if it is so easy and so simple, why then are there so many unbelievers today - even unbelievers who previously were believers?

- Also this answer is provided by the Holy Spirit.
- It is an alarming answer: The Lord does not give his Holy Spirit to just anyone.

¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:17 KJV)

The disciples also once enquired why there are people who can observe the Lord's miracles and hear His sermons and then become believers - while there are others who observe the same miracles and who hear the same sermons that those who became believers heard, but they do not convert. He then answered them saying:

¹¹He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. (Matthew 13:11 KJV)

The Lord's answer means that to those who remain unbelievers, God the Holy Spirit is not given. The Holy Spirit works faith in a person. If He is not given to someone, then that person cannot be converted.

There are more similar pronouncements in the Bible. Listen to only the following:

¹¹But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. (Matthew 19:11 KJV)

¹⁰And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. (Luke 8:10 KJV)

A very striking passage in the Bible is the verse in Acts 5 which beautifully clarifies that witness (=what you believe!) and obedience to God are tied to the fact that the Holy Spirit is given to such people.

³²And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Acts 5:32 KJV)

The sum of it all is that God makes certain people His children. To those, He gives His Holy Spirit. It teaches them to understand that they are the children of God, and then they worship God as their Father.

⁶And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (Galatians 4:6 KJV)

In modern times the work of the Holy Spirit is oftentimes ridiculed and denied. The people who do so, can never be saved. They simply cannot be in the eternal life, because God reveals that He simply does not allow such people there.

³¹Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. ³²And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. (Matthew 12:31-32 KJV)

So where do we stand?

The Lord Jesus Christ seals us in the redemption. That is why God the Holy Spirit is given to us. He makes us to hear the gospel of redemption.

Then He makes us to believe it!

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, we fully share in redemption, salvation and recreation.

How do I know?

The fact that the Holy Spirit makes me to believe these things means that the Lord Jesus gave Him to me as a seal and guarantee.

Remember the revelation of the Lord, which teaches:

¹³In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.(Ephesians 1:13-14 KJV)

Let us look what we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 20:

Question 53: What do you believe concerning the Holy Spirit?

Answer: *First, He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God.^[1] Second, He is also given to me,^[2] to make me by true faith share in Christ and all His benefits,^[3] to comfort me,^[4] and to remain with me forever.^[5]*

^{1]} Gen. 1:1, 2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; I Cor. 3:16. ^[2] I Cor. 6:19; II Cor. 1:21, 22; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13. ^[3] Gal. 3:14; I Pet. 1:2. ^[4] John 15:26; Acts 9:31. ^[5] John 14:16, 17; I Pet. 4:14.

Amen.

Prayer.

Sing Psalm 31:12

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*O how abundant is Thy goodness,
Which is reserved for all
Who fear Thee and recall
What Thou hast done for those who serve Thee,
And all who have oppressed them
Shall see that Thou hast blessed them.*

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.³

Amen.

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³ 2 Corinthians 13:14