

Lenten devotionals: day 32

Hear the words of comfort

John 3:16 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Often expressed as the whole message of the Bible in a nutshell this is probably the most quoted/known verse.

It certainly does capture the essence of the creed

We believe:

God: the three together loved the world that was created. Loved it in its perfection and saw that it was good. Loved it more and actively in its imperfection and initiated the restoration plan.

He: God the father, almighty one, Jehovah (English translation) gave the son, Jesus Christ. The spoken word of God, that became as man, taking on the earthly, human form. Born in humble beginnings, a man on a mission to provide the way back to life.

We believe that the son lived on this earth, paid the necessary sacrifice for all the wrongs in this world once and for all, so that as forgiven, spirit filled people we can have

Eternity: the life of being sons of God, heir to the throne.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:11

I like the extended explanation that Phillips gives

All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father". The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his suffering we shall certainly share in his glory.

We may repeat these words of comfort on a Sunday, sharing them with those around us that also believe.

Do we also believe them enough on Monday, as we share our life with others who may not believe. Do we believe enough and love enough to live our lives allowing the spirit to stir within us to demonstrate God's love to the world?

Go in peace to love and serve your Lord.

Go on your way, rejoicing. Have a wonderful weekend

Lenten devotionals: day 28

I am delighted to find this ASL version of the apostolic creed, especially as it is spoken also.

Many years ago, when I lived in Canada I completed an introduction to ASL course. I have not had occasion to use it much, but pleased that I was able to follow along. Perhaps some of you use, understand or have experience with ASL or BSL or Makaton.

Again, mixing it up a little to fit in with Lent and Easter, today we start,

I believe Christ sits at the right hand of God

Picture the scene. As a full time stay at home parent, you have risen before your family to prepare a nutritious

breakfast, ensured all have clean clothes to wear, a healthy lunch and snacks, homework checked and all places in school bags.

Then the school run, pick up groceries and home to do the laundry, make beds, tidy away cluttered toys and clothes from bedroom floors and made advance start on dinner. A care visit on an elderly neighbour takes you through to the afternoon, when you can have a short breather, before the afternoon school run. What do you do?

Sit in your favourite chair with a cup of tea or coffee and rest, assured that you have fulfilled tasks for the day.

Or as a full time professional, you have risen early to beat the rush hour traffic, in order to get to work in plenty of time to prepare for that morning meeting in which you have to present recent figures. Then, there are emails to answer, phone calls to make, jobs that require attention and bosses that want everything yesterday, not when you can possibly deliver. Finally, just before end of day, you have five minutes to yourself, to sit at the desk with the lunch you didn't have time to eat and feel good about the empty in tray, the full out box, the neatly written planner for tomorrow and the cluttered desk cleared.

Sitting and resting after a good days work is satisfying. Time to review and rest with tomorrow planned.

After Jesus had finished his ministry on earth. When the debt for sin had been paid, and the work of salvation complete, He returned to the father, God and sat down on the right hand.

The significance for us His people lies in the deeper, better approach we enjoy to our God, through the spirit of Christ. The way that Jesus told us, we would have through Him.

Because Jesus cried, "It is finished"

Because he was triumphant over death

Because we have access to the Father

Jesus sits to signify completion until the bride is prepared, waiting for her to join Him in heaven.

Whatever prosperity or defeat may occur in our space, whatever may become and pass away, there is one constant, one thing that remains and continues, this sitting of His at the right hand of God the Father. [\[16\]](#)

Lenten devotionals: day 26

I believe in life everlasting...

John 17:3 (TYN) This is lyfe eternall that they myght knowe the(e) that only very God and whom thou hast sent Iesus Christ.

Reading this Tyndale version of John 17 gave me a fresh view of the verse.

Here Jesus reminds us that God, all three, exists outside of time. Eternity is, was and shall be. When we accept the gift of life through the redemption of Christ we become independent of time. Plainly speaking our eternal life is now, was before sin and will be in each moment.

I hope that you are reading this in your quiet space. Stop. Be still. Focus. This may be scary, but become outside of time. There is no regret, lamb of God, paid the debt. There is no care or worry for tomorrow. Abba, father, provides. There is only now. Energy, strength, hope, love and faith, spirit filled life.

Are you thirsty? Drink the cup of salvation

Are you hungry? Feed on the bread of life.

Are you tired? Rest in the promise, "come unto me, "

*Then shall the young women rejoyce in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.*

I will turn their mourning into joy;

I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ *I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance,
and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness,
declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 31:13-14*

Take as long as you need in quiet meditation. Open your heart, ears, soul to the eternal and feel the strength. Empty yourself of all but love and absorb the enormity and [silence of eternity.](#)

Turn the sound down or even off for 5 minutes silent meditation.

Go in peace.

Lenten devotionals: day 23

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,**

Even though I exercise regularly, try to eat well, have never smoked and by choice don't drink, my 66 year old body tells my spirit, this home is not for ever.

I believe that one day I will have a body that does not ache, show signs of age and become weary.

Why do I believe?

Come, let us journey.

Text based on John 11.

The setting: Having been in the desert area where John had preached and baptised, Jesus wanted to return to Judea.

A disciple takes up the story.

We have just crossed the river Jordan, heading back to Judea. Jesus is resolute in this decision, but we are unsettled.

“Lord, you know that to travel this way is to go towards death”

” I know. A family needs me”.

On the way we discuss recent events and are troubled. We had heard that our friend Lazarus was sick and Jesus did not seem to care. Now, when he says he is sleeping, surely a sign that he will get better, Jesus decides to go to them?

"No " Jesus revealed, "Lazarus has died. I must go and see him."

It was Thomas who persuaded us that we should go with Jesus, even if it meant we too would die.

It was a quiet, pensive journey. As we approached Bethany, Martha ran out to greet us.

"Lord, if you had been with us, my brother would not have died. Yet, I have faith that God will do anything you ask"

"Martha, Lazarus will rise again."

"Yes, I know he will rise in the resurrection."

"Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe this will not die. Do you believe?"

"Yes, Lord. I believe you are Messiah, come into the world."

Martha then left to tell Mary that Jesus was here. We remained and waited for Mary.

When she arrived and Jesus saw her weeping, he was moved by her grief. We went to the tomb and there Jesus wept.

A moment of silence



Jesus wept

I found this rather penetrating song and it so expresses what I want to leave us with today. I hope you benefit by it also. Don't forget to connect with others today, start a conversation below.

Join us tomorrow as we continue...

Lenten devotionals: day 22

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

Yesterday I met an angel.

No, it was not a stunning looking man in white robes with flowing hair and sturdy wings.

Allow me to tell you the story.

I had just attended communion at St James cathedral. I exited the building to a white world of snow. Winters last hurrah we hope. I decided to enjoy the snow and walk back to my place of stay. Toronto in the late morning, on a Sunday is an amazing mixture of people. Some, like myself, appeared to be amused by winters joke, others surprised. I heard snatches of conversation, "It was supposed to be warm today"; "Yesterday I wore shorts...."

I smiled in sympathetic amusement. Then God challenged me, as I started to notice the wet, bedraggled clothes left in doorways, indicating that someone had spent a cold, uncomfortable night on the street. Suddenly I was ashamed of the large bed I had slept in.

A young man approached me, smiling, and asked if I could spare some change. I had given some to the church, I thought. I smiled and walked on. Grieved, I wondered, how do you cope living in a city with so much need? Does it break your heart, because you cannot, or choose not, to give?

I walked on with sorrow and guilt in my heart. Waiting at the next crosswalk, I was aware of someone sitting against the fenced off building site. Then, the angel appeared, disguised as a youngish, ordinary man in casual clothes, with the kindest smile I have seen in a long time. He stopped, bent down and greeted the man, "Hello, my brother, do you want to go and get a coffee?"

I looked at him and smiled my thanks and gratitude. Thanks for doing what I failed to do. Gratitude for teaching me the lesson of gentle kindness.

The angel and his brother crossed the street chatting amiably, deciding which kind of coffee to have and if they could manage a bite to eat.

I continued on my way.

Romans 3:23 New King James Version (NKJV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [New King James Version \(NKJV\)](#)

I learned a great lesson yesterday. I fell short of God's grace, yet He sent his angel to be a messenger. Probably that beautiful young man didn't even know he ministered to two lost souls that day as he cared for the physical and emotional needs of one and for my spiritual need.

Father God, thank you for forgiveness.

Lord, thank you for those that minister to others.

Spirit of God, guide and stir me up to the good I should do.

Lenten devotionals: day 20

I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints

What is the purpose of the church?

The primary purpose of the church of course is to Worship God. The summary of the law as stated by Jesus is to love God with all our hearts, soul and mind. If this is our daily focus, then we will naturally worship He whom we love. A group of like minded people who get together praise or worship that which connects them.

A group of enthusiasts for a sports team swap stories about their favourite players, games they have watched, how brilliantly they are doing. They worship their team.

Groupies for a particular musician attend concerts and lift their hands in praise to the music.

A church, a group of believers, sharing the same faith, share stories, raise their voices in song and worship their creator, God and saviour.

This is a beautiful thing. Not for the beauty of sound, not for the feeling we get, not even for the joy we share. It is beautiful because God, in His wisdom as creator of all things, made us to worship Him in this way knowing that in so doing, we ourselves would also be blessed by it.

When the church worships, heaven responds.

When the church worships we reach up to God.

When the church worships His name is published.

When the church worships the Spirit moves.

When the church worships things happen.

I enjoy most church music and have wide taste including old hymns, spirituals, gospel, chant and Taise style.

What is your favourite Praise hymn or song?

It will be interesting to find out what variety we have in worship. Share your favourite in comments.

Good night and God bless. Have a great weekend.

Lenten devotionals: day 18

I believe in the Holy Spirit – comforter.

I write this at the end of a busy day. Even though my mind and emotions want to deny it, grandma is feeling a little tired. The thought of snuggling under a comforter with a hot drink and some light reading sounds appealing.

Yet, this gives a lovely analogy of the Holy Spirit – comforter.

Read again Jesus's words to the apostles.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be^[c] in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

Why were these words spoken to the disciples necessary?

During his ministry on earth Jesus gave comfort and healing to many.

The woman whom he healed of haemorrhage, demonstrated faith and humility in her words, "I only need to touch the hem of his robe to be healed,". She knew that she was putting herself at risk daring to even approach Jesus. She accepted she needed no great show of miraculous healing. All she needed was to quietly touch Jesus to be made whole.

Zaccheaus was treated kindly by Jesus, such that the comfort and acceptance he received, helped him see his faults and make amends by sharing his wealth.

Mary and Martha were comforted by Jesus himself expressing grief at the death of Lazarus. The act of restoring Lazarus back to them gave them and us a powerful demonstration of the comfort of the resurrection.

However Jesus's time on earth was limited. His mission was primarily to save not just comfort. The time was approaching when he would return to God the father. By fulfilling his mission he gave us the right to seek comfort and guidance with the gift of the holy spirit.

Today, we take comfort in knowing that the law of condemnation for sin has been overturned by the sacrifice of a perfect life. We can wrap ourselves and rest in the warmth and comfort of the spirit: of that life giving energy that was at the very beginning. The breath of God that formed the earth which God declared as 'good', now breathes new life into us as we accept the salvation offered in Christ, so we can be called , 'very good' once more.

Lord I confess that so often I fail. I claim the forgiveness you promise through the sacrifice of Jesus. Heal and comfort my broken spirit through the breath and comfort of your holiness. In this I praise and serve you and tell of your love and mercy to all. In Christ I live.

God bless you all. I thank God for all of you that drop by. Comments are appreciated.

Lenten devotionals: day 17

I believe in the Holy Spirit.....in creation. ([day 16](#))

I believe in the Holy Spirit as an influencer

The life giving breath or spirit of God was in the creation of the world. He saw that everything was good, even very good when man was created and given a home in which to dwell.

Yet, man, in the wisdom and desire of God, was not created as a puppet. God gave us the freedom of choice, which led to the downfall and hardship of life. Whilst we strive to do right, as humans we make unwise choices seeking the way of selfishness and pride rather than love and humility. Even the world that God gave to us became limited and “groans in labour pains” [Romans 8:19-23](#)

The Holy Spirit empowers and stirs up our soul in order to heal our broken world. In modern speak he is like a collective conscience that breaks through the barriers and stirs up broken spirits to goodness and truth.

To do that under the law, He chose to work through individuals, providing them with power and occasionally special gifts in order to restore balance.

To Joseph he gave the ability to interpret dreams.

To Moses he gave the ability to lead and as required to change the nature of creation to provide food, shelter and sanctuary to the people.

To the prophets he gave signs and wonders and the gift of healing, such as Elijah raising the widow's son, Elisha healing Naaman of leprosy.

To Jonah he gave power to overcome fear, after a creative disciplining -sort of like sitting on a very stinky, scary dark naughty step. Such that Jonah can declare ,

*"But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.*

What I have vowed I will make good.

I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" Jonah 2:9

And now, like this e writer of Hebrews, "I do not have time to write of others" who were enabled by the Spirit to do great things.

For this is the exciting bit. The Spirit stirs within us and works endlessly to restore the world back into a relationship with God creator, father. He is our counsellor and teacher and we can use his influence to get excited about His work for us to influence a dying world. This great news will be explored tomorrow (actually later today as I had to delay actually posting this). If you want further reading I was inspired by reading article

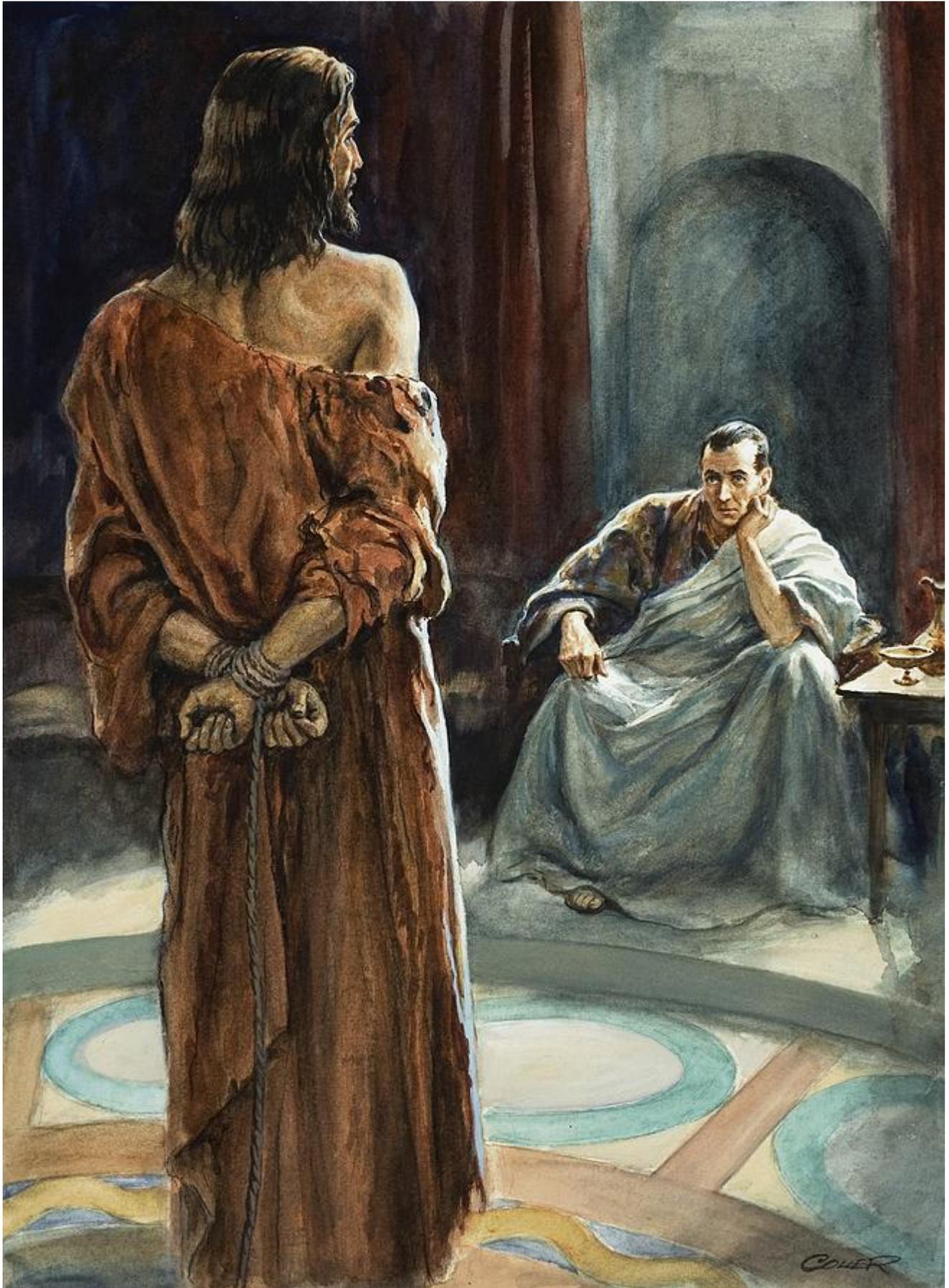
<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-believers-experienced-the-spirit-before-pentecost>

Are you excited about how God spirit is working in and through you? Connect with us and share your ideas and experiences.

Lenten devotional: day 15

As a pause for reflection today recite the whole creed, apostolic or nicene whichever is your preference and allow God

to speak through the images below or your favourite art work.



Christ before Pilate



The Lord bless you and keep you, make his face to shine upon you and grant you peace.

Share the peace with someone today.

Lenten devotions: day 14

I believe Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Pilate: Upon what charge do you bring this man here?

It is early morning. Outside the palace a crowd lingers. Then Pilate appears. A masterful and imposing figure he looks down on those gathered outside the gate.

Crowd: He is a criminal, otherwise we would not have brought him to you.

Pilate: Have you no law in which to charge him? Take him away and deal with him yourself.

Crowd: But we cannot have him executed under our law.

Pilate returns back inside and has Jesus brought to him.

Pilate: Are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus: My kingdom is not of this world. If it were you would have no power over me.

Pilate: So you are a king then?

Jesus: So you say. I tell you that my purpose in this world is to testify to the truth. All who know the truth listen to me.

Pilate: What is truth?

What is truth?

Truth is an understanding of right.

Truth is undeniable.

Truth is based on trust.

Truth is feared by those who live in ignorance.

Truth is revered by those who seek mercy and justice.

Truth is light.

Truth is a hard task master but the reward is great.

Truth is eternal.

What say you?