



Spoke By The Prophets

A SUMMER SERMON SERIES ON THE NICENE CREED

Psalm 119:9-16, 33-40

2 Timothy 3:10-17 Matthew 7:24-29

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One of the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the *Inspiration of Holy Scripture*¹. The English word **Inspiration** comes from a Latin word that means “*breathe*” and it refers to the Holy Spirit *breathing* the words of *Holy Scripture* to the Prophets and the Apostles. St. Paul teaches this in the New Testament:

All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

We call the Bible the “**Word of God**” because **we literally mean** that it is God’s Word to us. God does **not** speak to you in dreams, visions, or signs; but He does speak to you in *Holy Scripture*. The Bible was written by many and various Prophets and Apostles throughout the centuries, but *the unifying author of Holy Scripture is God the Holy Spirit*.

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the **Holy Spirit**. 2 Peter 1:21

¹ “We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the **Holy Spirit** communicated to them by inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is . . . taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 2:13. Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth . . .” LCMS “Brief Statement of 1932”

Since the Bible teaches the Holy Spirit *inspired* the Scriptures, the Holy Christian Church confesses it, and echoes that truth, in the **Nicene Creed**²:

We believe in
THE HOLY SPIRIT,
the Lord and Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son
Who with the Father and the Son together
is worshiped and glorified,
Who spoke by the Prophets³.

Holy Scripture, the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the authority of our Christian faith and life as conservative Lutherans. Other church bodies may have additional sources of authority, such as tradition, reason, the teachings of men, and private revelation, **but we do not.** For us, all of our doctrine and teachings come from Holy Scripture⁴. There is nothing on the same level as Holy Scripture. *The Bible is the foundation of everything that we believe, teach, and confess.* All teachers and doctrines are judged according to the Word of God. All of our Called Pastors, Teachers, and Church workers pledge adherence to Scripture's authority. Our congregation has pledged to hold to Holy Scripture as we "walk together" with the other congregations of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod⁵. *The Bible is the foundation of everything that we believe, teach, and confess.* In the early days of the Lutheran Reformation, this truth was confessed with the words "*sola scriptura*" → **ONLY SCRIPTURE!**

² The Nicene Creed was written in 325AD in response to a false teacher named Arius. He was teaching that Jesus was not fully God. The Christian Church countered with a confession of faith that we know as the Nicene Creed. At the time there was no controversy about the Holy Spirit, so the Creed ended with simply "We believe in the Holy Spirit." Several decades later, false teachers attacked the Holy Spirit. The Christian Church met again, in 381 AD, and added the final paragraphs about the Holy Spirit and the Holy Christian Church. The Nicene Creed is the most widely accepted Creed within the Holy Christian Church.

³ "Who spoke by the Prophets" also includes the Apostles of the New Testament!

⁴ "We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2:20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged . . ." LCMS "Brief Statement of 1932"

⁵ The word "Synod" in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod comes from Greek words that mean "walking together." The term has rich meaning in our church body because congregations voluntarily choose to belong to the Synod. Though diverse in their service, our congregations hold to a shared confession of Jesus Christ as taught in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Lutheran congregations are confessional. Our congregations believe the Lutheran Confessions are a correct interpretation and presentation of biblical doctrine. <https://www.lcms.org/about/beliefs>

The Holy Spirit speaks by the Prophets and the Apostles and teaches us in Holy Scripture that the Bible itself is a Christ centered book⁶. The central teaching of the Bible is that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. The Old Testament not only has numerous examples of God saving the Israelites --- and even Gentiles like Rahab, Ruth, and Nineveh --- but it is full of *types and prophecies*⁷ of the coming Savior who will save the entire world. The New Testament records the fulfillment of all those *types and prophecies* in Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem, died in Jerusalem, and rose from the dead on the Third Day. **Everything in Scripture draws our attention to Jesus.** Because the Bible is Christ centered, we too are Christ centered people.

Because the Holy Spirit *spoke through the Prophets* and has *inspired the Holy Scriptures*, it is a powerful way that He works in our lives. The Holy Spirit works through the Law of God, that is the 10 Commandments, to convict you of sin. The Law of God exposes your sin and accuses you of disobedience, rebellion, and immorality. The Law of God is described as a hammer that crushes hard hearts Jeremiah 23:29. The Holy Spirit works through the Law of God to crush your pride and expose your sin. But the Holy Spirit does not leave you crushed under your sin and guilt. He brings the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to you.

The Gospel is the good news that God sent His Son to be your Savior. Because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God does not count your sins against you. Your sins were counted against Jesus when He died on the cross. You are set free from your sins and forgiven. Your sins will never be used against you. They are removed from you. You have peace with God and are given a good, clean, and clear conscience. This is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel⁸. Through this powerful, life giving good news, the Holy Spirit creates faith, forgive sins, and gives eternal life. Holy Scripture is truly a **Means of Grace**⁹: away the Holy Spirit works to bring God's grace into your life!

⁶ Jesus taught this to us in John 5:39: “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about Me”. It is also taught in Acts 10:43: “All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His Name.” In theology, this is called the “Christological Interpretation of Scripture.”

⁷ In a nutshell, a type is something or someone in the Old Testament that prefigures Jesus in some way --- like the Passover Lamb, Manna from Heaven, or the High Priests. A prophecy are specific words that predict something about the Savior and His life – such as Isaiah 7:14: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel.” In both cases of type and prophecy, the New Testament makes the identification for us so that we know for sure, and don’t have to guess about it.

⁸ One thing, and only one thing, is necessary for Christian life, righteousness and freedom. That one thing is the most Holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ ... If one has the Word of God, [he] is rich and lacks nothing since it is the Word of life, truth, light, peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, freedom, wisdom, power, grace, glory, and of every incalculable blessing. Martin Luther, Treasury of Daily Prayer, p.220

⁹ “Through the means of grace alone God chooses to deal with us unto our salvation, to bestow His gifts of forgiveness, peace, joy, and everlasting life. . . . when, under terrors of conscience, we seek assurance of

When we think about *the Holy Spirit speaking through the Prophets and the Apostles of Holy Scripture*, it's easy to see why we are so often directed to read, study, and learn His Word.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night Psalm 1:1

Holy Scripture is the most important thing that you can read, study, and learn. There is nothing in the same category as the Bible. It is the Wisdom of God. True, godly, and eternal wisdom is found only in the Word of God. That's why we read, study, and learn it.

Soon all of our [Bible studies](#) are going to be starting here at Trinity. Come and join us in studying God's Holy Word; there are many opportunities at many different times in the hopes that at least one of them will work for you. In addition to a Bible study, you can have [personal devotions](#) each day. That simply means you spend a few minutes each day reading, studying, and learning God's Holy Word. There are a 1,000 different ways you can do that; if you need a Bible, I'll give you one for free after church today!

What a treasure the Lord has given to us with His Holy Word! May it be your daily companion, always pointing you to the Lord Jesus. And May God the Holy Spirit work in your life so that you are evermore biblically literate and doctrinally sound.

With the Christian Church over the last 1700 years, we continue to confess the truths of holy scripture through the Nicene Creed! And especially today,

**We believe in the Holy Spirit ...
Who spoke by the prophets.**

Amen!

God's grace, He has bound us to the objective Word of the Gospel and to the Sacraments . . . The Holy Spirit chooses to work through the means of grace. In them He is at home and at work; and, knowing this from Holy Scripture, we shall not seek Him and His gracious operations elsewhere. Acts 20:32 Acts 2:38 1 Peter 3:21
I am almost certain this quote is from Francis Pieper, "Christian Dogmatics", Volume III, but I could not find the exact page in a brief review.

God the Holy Spirit,
we thank You for speaking through
the Prophets and the Apostles, **and**
giving us the Word of God. We ask
that You create a hunger and thirst
within us **to learn and understand**
more and more of Your Word. Work
in our lives to convict us of sin, **and to**
create faith in our Savior Jesus Christ
who forgives our sins. Strengthen us
through Your Word **to live wholly and**
godly lives, glorifying our Father in
Heaven, **confessing Jesus our Savior,**
and loving our neighbor. **We ask this**
in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Psalm 119:9-16, 33-40

9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

10 I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

11 I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

12 Praise be to you, Lord;

teach me your decrees.

13 With my lips I recount

all the laws that come from your mouth.

14 I rejoice in following your statutes

as one rejoices in great riches.

15 I meditate on your precepts

and consider your ways.

16 I delight in your decrees;

I will not neglect your word.

33 Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,

that I may follow it to the end.

34 Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law

and obey it with all my heart.

35 Direct me in the path of your commands,

for there I find delight.

36 Turn my heart toward your statutes

and not toward selfish gain.

37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things;

preserve my life according to your word.

38 Fulfill your promise to your servant,

so that you may be feared.

39 Take away the disgrace I dread,

for your laws are good.

40 How I long for your precepts!

In your righteousness preserve my life.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, 11 persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matthew 7:24-29

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” 28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.