



# Giver of Life

A SUMMER SERMON SERIES ON THE NICENE CREED

**Ephesians 1:3-14   2 Corinthians 1:18-22**

**John 5:19-30**

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In the Nicene Creed, we confess that

## **We believe in the Holy Spirit**

*The Lord and Giver of life.*

That phrase *Lord And Giver Of Life* is meant to teach us

- that the Holy Spirit is the One, True, and Only God, equal with the Father, equal with the Son.
- It is also meant to teach that the Holy Spirit is the Creator of the world, just as the Father and the Son created the world. The Holy Spirit is **not** a created thing, **nor** is He part of creation. He is the creator, as is the Father and the Son!

The **Holy Spirit**, *the Lord and Giver of life*, works through the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church to give life to all who believe in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has done that for you as well. He has given you life, and you can think of that life in three different ways.

**First**, He has given you **physical life**. In the Nicene Creed we say that the Holy Spirit is the *Giver of life*. That word *Giver* is the same word that's used of God the Father in the Nicene Creed, when we say "We believe in God the Father Almighty, **Maker** of heaven and earth." The Holy Spirit is your **Maker**; He has *given you life* at your conception and brought you safely into this world<sup>1</sup>. He has given you *your body and soul, eyes, ears and all your members, your reason and all your senses, and still preserves them*. In the Nicene Creed, we confess the truth of Holy Scripture: that the Holy Spirit is our *Creator and Maker* Who has **given us life and preserves that life**<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we can take some liberty with the "Athanasian Creed" and teach it like this: "the Father is Creator, the Son is Creator, and the Holy Spirit is Creator; yet there are not 3 Creators but One Creator."

<sup>2</sup> Because of the total depravity of the world, when you talk about Creation, you have to include the life of unborn babies. The unborn child is a person as much as we are; their bodies are just at a different state of development. Unborn babies are created by the Lord and Giver of Life and are holy and sacred to Him. Abortion is an atrocious sin of killing unborn children who are created in the Image of God, and loved by Him. If you

**The Nicene Creed also emphasizes** the truth that the Holy Spirit gives you **spiritual life** through the forgiveness of sins. The One who **proceeds from the Father and the Son** works through the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church to wash your sins away in Holy Baptism and to give you spiritual life! We confess that . . .

I acknowledge one **Baptism** for the remission of sins<sup>3</sup>

Baptism is a tool of the Holy Spirit to forgive your sins. In theology it's called a Means of Grace<sup>4</sup>, it's a way that the Lord has chosen to bring His grace personally into your life. In Holy Baptism, the word picture is that you are washed clean, "*born again*" as God puts His Name on you and you are brought into His family. In Baptism, you are rescued from the darkness of this world and moved into the Kingdom of God. As Martin Luther wrote in the Large Catechism:

*...even though to all appearances it may not be worth a straw . . . nevertheless, it is truly God's own act.* (Large Catechism)

Spiritual life is a way to describe faith. When you are spiritually alive, you are responsive to God and His Word. Being spiritually alive means that the Holy Spirit lives within you, working in and through you to speak godly words and do holy things.

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have been caught up in abortion somehow, then repent, confess it to God, and look to Christ who forgives all of your sins and cleanses you from all unrighteousness. Abortion is not the unforgiveable sin. He forgives you and comforts you with His love and forgiveness.

<sup>3</sup> Most Protestants have abandoned this truth of Holy Scripture. Most teach that Holy Baptism is a work of man, a simple good work and confession of faith that one performs in obedience to God. Most do not believe that "The Lord and Giver of Life" is at work, forgiving sins. As conservative Lutheran Christians, we hold that Holy Baptism is truly a "sacrament," that is, a mysterious work of God where He forgives our sins! If you want to review the key Bible verses of Holy Baptism, see Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:38, 22:16; John 3:5-6; 1 Peter 3:21; Titus 3:5-7; and Romans 6:3-5. These verses clearly teach that Baptism is God's work of salvation; and not a simple good work we perform. As conservative Lutherans, we boldly confess that we "acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins!"

<sup>4</sup> By the Means of Grace are meant those things by which God offers and gives His gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. . . . All Means of Grace have the same purpose and the same effect, namely, the conferring of the forgiveness of sins and the resultant engendering and strengthening of faith. The three "Means of Grace" are Holy Scripture, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion. These are the three places where God has placed His promise to forgive sins. Frequently, these "Means of Grace," are referred to as the Word and Sacraments. These are the true "holy" things in the One, Holy, Christian, and Apostolic Church!

- ➔ Being spiritually alive means that you are dead to sin. Sin no longer has power over you, because you belong to the Lord, live in His Kingdom, and listen to His Commandments
- ➔ Being spiritually alive means that you actively fight your sinful nature. That every day you live under the cross of the Lord Jesus and you renounce the devil, and all of his evil works and all of his wicked ways.
- ➔ Being spiritually alive means that you live a life of repentance: always hating sin, always confessing your sin, and always knowing that you are loved and forgiven because of the Lord Jesus Christ
- ➔ being spiritually alive means that your eyes and your heart is focused on Christ, His Word, and His Kingdom
- ➔ being spiritually alive means that you are ever striving to be biblically literate, doctrinally sound, mission minded, and passionately engaged in the Kingdom of God.

The **Lord and Giver of life** has given you spiritual life. He has given you faith through the water of Holy Baptism so that you know Jesus as your Savior and God as your Father. **YOU ARE ALIVE IN CHRIST!**

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, has given you **physical life** at your conception and birth; and **spiritual life** when you were *born again* in Holy Baptism.

**In addition to this**, the Holy Spirit has given you **eternal life**. Because Jesus has risen from the dead, you too shall rise from the dead! Eternal life means that at the instant of death, at that very moment, your soul is immediately with Christ in heaven. Physical death, however it may happen, cannot interrupt the eternal life that God has given to you. Your soul will immediately be with Christ in heaven. And then on the Last Day, when Jesus returns in great power and glory, He will raise your body from the dead, and glorify it. Your resurrection body will be fit for an eternity in heaven, and you will live forever in the Kingdom of Heaven in both body and soul.

In the Nicene Creed we confess this when we say

I look for the **resurrection of the dead**  
and the **life** of the world to come.

Eternal and resurrected life comes only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself rose from the dead on the Third Day; and because He lives, you too shall live. This is God's promise to you; His Words are faithful and true. The resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come is our **hope**; confident faith that God will keep these promises to us, even after we die. In fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life right now is the **guarantee** that you have eternal life. The Bible describes His presence in your life now as a **deposit**, *a down payment*, **guaranteeing** you the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a **deposit** guaranteeing our inheritance . . . Ephesians 1:13b-14a

He anointed us, and set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a **deposit**, guaranteeing what is to come. 2 Corinthians 1:22

The Holy Spirit at work in you **now**  
is the guarantee that you will live forever **later!**

**Life is a gift from God . . .**

**FROM God the Father**

Who is the Maker of all things visible and invisible.

**FROM God the Son, Jesus Christ,**  
by Whom all things were made

**FROM God the Holy Spirit**  
*The Lord and giver of life.*

By the grace of God, you have been given life:  
**physical life spiritual life and eternal life**

Amen!

God the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, we thank You for working in our lives to give us physical life, spiritual life, and eternal life. We thank You for rescuing us from death and making us Your very own people. Deepen our conviction in these great gifts You have given to us, and help our lives to reflect that we are dead to sin, and alive to You and Your Word. Help us to glorify our Father in Heaven and to be lights that shine for Jesus our Savior, in whose Name we pray, Amen.

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# Ephesians 1:3-14

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he[b] predestined us for adoption to sonship[c] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he[d] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen,[e] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

## 2 Corinthians 1:18-22

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas[c] and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” 20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

# John 5:19-30

Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. 25 Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

28 “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.