

The Holy Spirit Calls Us Through the Gospel

Do you remember that a creed is a statement of what we believe? As Christians, we believe something that sounds strange: “I believe that I cannot . . . believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him.” We are not saved by our own reason or strength. People are saved only by believing in Jesus. But faith is not something that we do. We are **dependent** on the Holy Spirit for this gift of faith.

The fact that salvation is completely the work of the Holy Spirit is a difficult thing to understand and believe. But this is what the Scriptures teach. In our human minds, we cannot fully understand how the Holy Spirit works. It is a **mystery**.

The Bible teaches that everyone is dead in sin.

The only **remedy** for this deadness in sin is to be born again. Jesus taught a man named Nicodemus about this in John 3. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus did not understand this and asked Jesus, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his



mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” While this was confusing to Nicodemus, we know that later he did come to believe in Jesus.

Acts 2:22–39 shows another example of the Holy Spirit working through the Word. Peter was preaching to a crowd in Jerusalem. He taught them about Jesus. He explained how Jesus was the promised Savior and told the crowd, “You killed Jesus.” The Holy Spirit used the Law through Peter’s words to pierce the hearts of the people. They saw their sin. In **despair**, they asked, “What shall we do?”

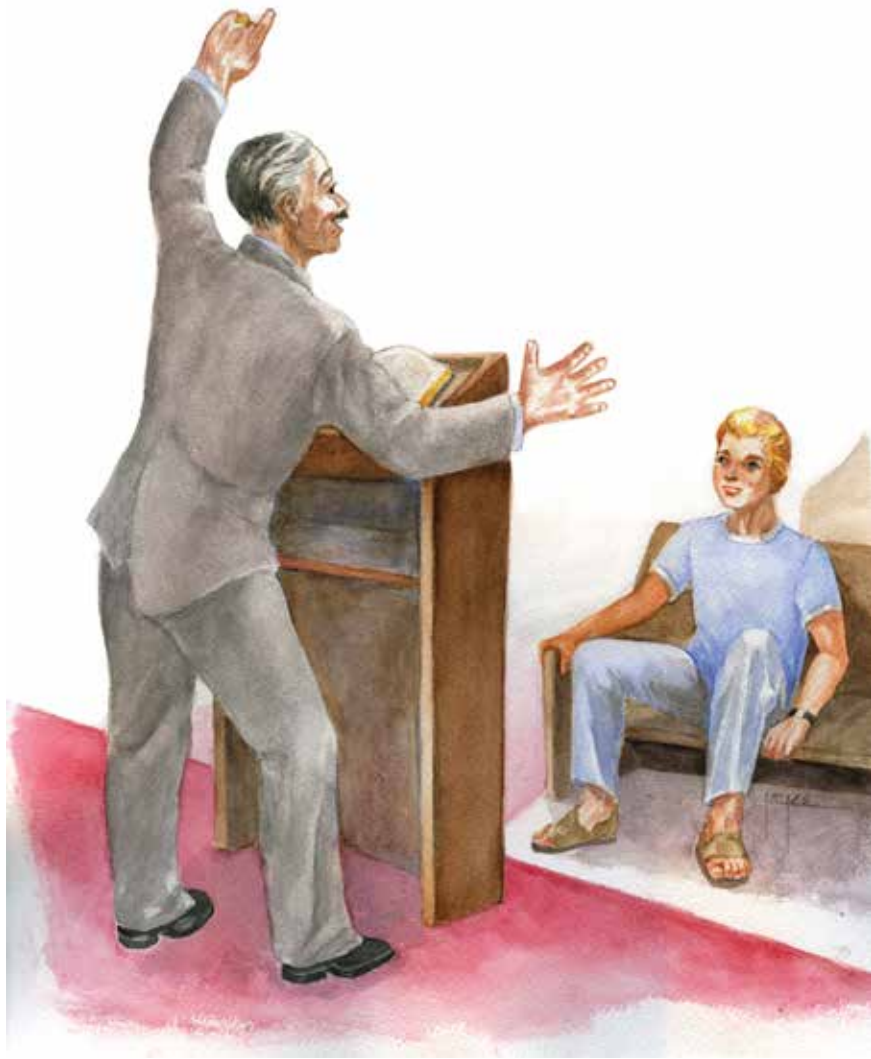
Peter replied with words of the Gospel: “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” About 3,000 people believed and were baptized that day. This was an amazing work of God!

God the Holy Spirit is still at work today.

A man named Steve was born into a family that never thought of or spoke about God. As he was growing up, Steve had occasionally gone to church, but he did not know Jesus. There were times when he didn’t feel good about his life and felt guilty about his behavior. Something was definitely bothering him, and he didn’t know how to solve it.

One weekend, Steve decided to attend a Sunday morning church service. He was feeling so lonely. The pastor preached plainly that morning from Romans 3:23–24. He said that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” He spoke of God’s deep love for all and of the wonderful peace available through the forgiveness of sins. As Steve listened, he heard the Gospel for the first time.

“God wants everyone to believe in Jesus and His forgiveness through His death on the cross,” the pastor stated. “The Holy Spirit is speaking to you through His Word, **convincing** you of your sin and showing



you your need of forgiveness. He offers you forgiveness in Jesus Christ.”

Steve’s heart was touched by what he heard. In the quietness of the church, he bowed his head, confessing his sins. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, his heart was opened to the Gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus. Steve spoke with the pastor, who later baptized him. Steve continued to learn more about Jesus and the Christian faith through a class at the church.

The Holy Spirit works to create true and living faith whenever God’s Word is taught and preached. The Holy Spirit calls you through the Gospel message that Christ has died for the sins of the world. The Holy Spirit gives you faith to believe Jesus’ sacrifice is for you and **assurance** and peace that your sins are forgiven.

ACTIVITY 1

Words to Remember

Complete the puzzle. The first letter of each answer is given for you.

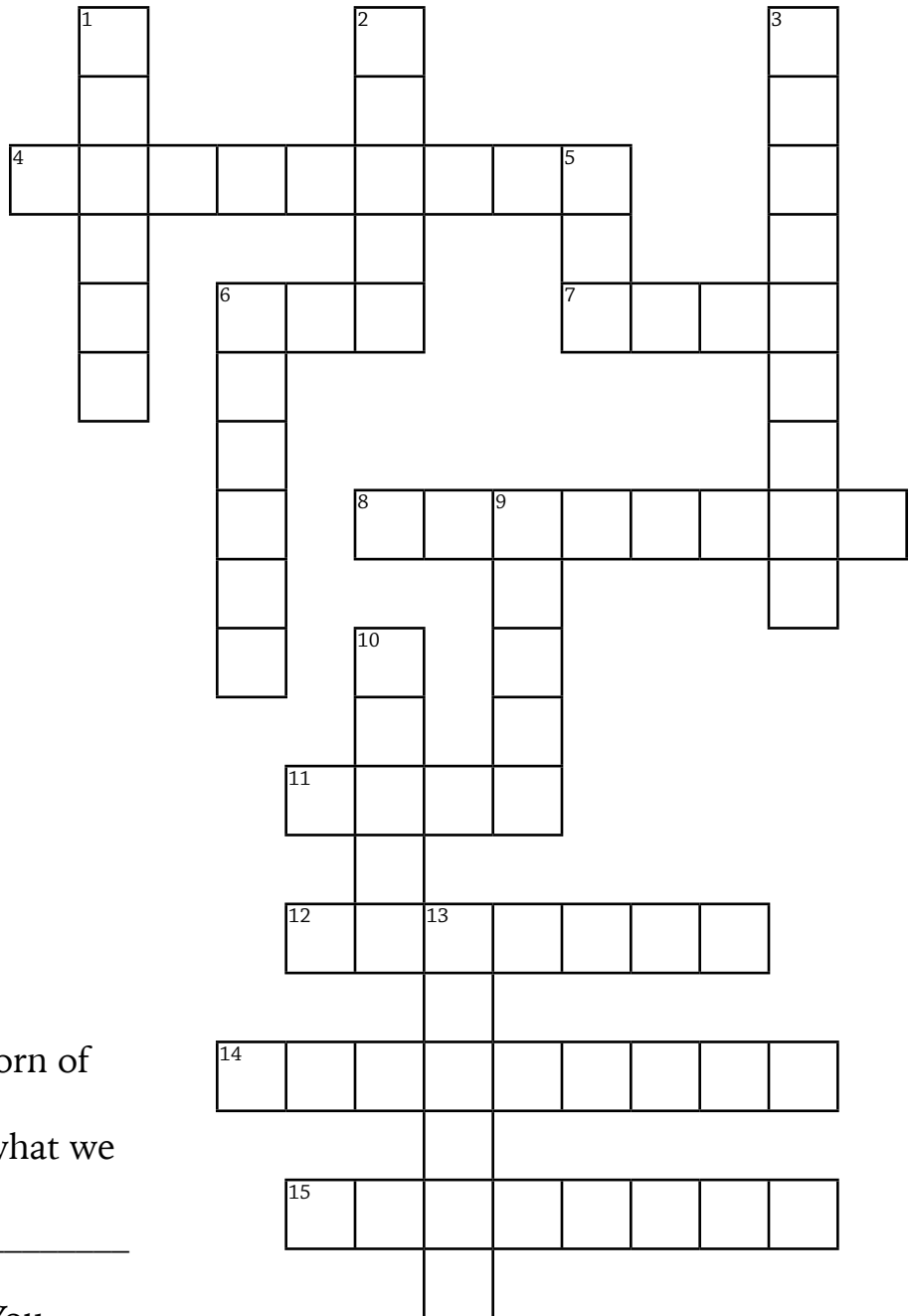
ACROSS:

4. Jesus taught **N**_____ about being born again.
6. **G**_____ is still at work today.
7. The Gospel is the good **N**_____ of salvation through Jesus.
8. About 3,000 people believed and were **B**_____.
11. God has great **L**_____ for all people.
12. We cannot fully understand the **M**_____ of how the Holy Spirit works.
14. **S**_____ is the work of the Holy Spirit.
15. God **P**_____ salvation to all who believe.

DOWN:

1. Being “born again” is being “born of water and the **S**_____.”
2. A **C**_____ is a statement of what we believe.
3. Peter preached to a crowd in **J**_____ about Jesus.
5. When Peter told the people, “You killed Jesus,” they saw their **S**_____.
6. The Holy Spirit calls you through the **G**_____.
9. The Holy Spirit gives **P**_____ that your sins are forgiven.

10. “All have sinned and fall short of the **G**_____ of God.”
13. Jesus is our **S**_____ from sin.



ACTIVITY 2

Who Does What?

Use the code grid to help you find two important truths.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a	b	q	c	l	d	i	p
b	w	o	h	f	k	m	o
c	v	g	a	e	l	b	r
d	n	e	s	i	g	r	t
e	c	k	n	y	b	p	u
f	h	a	b	e	o	i	d
g	c	e	g	i	w	d	l
h	k	n	r	s	u	o	r
i	f	p	v	o	r	n	y

The b3 i4 g7 e4 h4 e6 a6 c7 a6 d7

gives i1 f2 d4 d7 b3.

g1 c3 a4 a4 d3 me through
the d5 i4 d3 i2 f4 c5.

Catechism

The Third Article of Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit; . . .

What does this mean?

. . . but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, . . .

Memory Verse

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

—John 6:63

Enrichment Verse:

II Thessalonians 2:13b–14