

Who Are You?

As followers of Jesus Christ, our identity gives us authentic 'throne rights', which we must recognise and learn to use over time!

¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

(Heb 5:16)

¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

(Eph 3:12)

Throne Rights 3

You Are Filled with the Holy Spirit to Serve Christ in his Mission

This is such a powerful truth, and we need to appreciate the reality of the gift of the Holy Spirit within our lives and his outworking in our personal walk with God and our capacity to be 'good news' to others in our interactions with them. We need firstly, however, to briefly locate the Holy Spirit in his eternal setting of the Trinity.

A Brief Overview of the Trinity

There is clear evidence throughout the New Testament that while the Apostles had not developed a 'theology of the Trinity', as such, they had begun to think trinitarianly. Given that the Apostles started out as card-carrying, synagogue-trained, monotheistic Jews, this was quite a process involving their own experiences of encountering the risen Christ, and the person of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, coupled with the way that Jesus spoke about both his Father and the Holy Spirit, finally caused them to think about God in the trinitarian terms of three distinct persons within the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – this became their norm!

Based on what the Old Testament had already said about God, and what Jesus had taught them, Paul summarises how the Apostles came to recognise the Father as *...God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord and lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no-one has seen or can see...*(1Tim 6:15-16; Ex 33:18-23).

Who, however, had chosen to mediate himself to us through his Son and the Holy Spirit, which Irenaeus, Pastor and Bishop of Lyon, referred to as the 'two hands' of God.

Jesus said, ²⁶ *'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me.*

(Jn 15:26)

He also said, ¹³ *'But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'* (Jn 16:13, 15)

From this framework, we can begin to understand the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being expressed as:

The **Father as Initiator** – The One who instigated his eternal purpose:

The **Son as Mediator** – The One who stood between our Father and our sinful state:

The **Holy Spirit as Actuator** – The One who actualises God's love within us and draws us into the trinitarian life of fellowship with God that is transforming us into the image of Christ with ever-increasing glory.

⁸ *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (2Cor 3:18)

In this context, Paul addresses this prayer to the Father: ¹⁶ *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.* (Eph 3:16-17)

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Jesus referred to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as 'the promise of the Father.' He described it as either being baptised with the Holy Spirit, or being filled with the Spirit, with the result of receiving the power of the Spirit to give witness to God's good news of and by Jesus, through preaching, healing, and exorcisms.

⁴⁹ *I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high...* (Lu 24:49); and repeated in Acts 1:4 – *Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised...*

⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'* (Acts 1:8)

¹*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.* (Acts 2:1-4)

Power to Serve Jesus' Mission

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit within our lives is not just about ticking off another 'must have' item, rather, it is an essential element of God's work within our lives that equips us to effectively partner with Jesus in his mission of reconciliation and transformation.

Again, there is a trinitarian engagement in this amazing gift from God – let me explain:

As we know, Jesus is the Messiah (Heb.), or the Christ (Gk.) – both mean 'the anointed'.
³⁸ *...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.* (Acts 10:38)

Notice, the Father anointed Jesus *with* the Holy Spirit!!!

John tells us: ²⁰ *But you have an anointing from the Holy One...the Holy Spirit!!!* (1Jn 2:20)

So, the Father is the *anointer*, the Son is the *anointed*, and the Holy Spirit is the *anointing*!!!

How the Holy Spirit Empowers Us Personally

We have been brought into a living and conversational partnership with the Holy Spirit,

²⁵ *If it is through the Spirit that we have our life, let it be the Spirit that guides our steps.* (Gal 5:25)

- He speaks to us – ¹⁹ *While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.'* (The Voice of God within) (Acts 10:19-20)
- He draws us into a transforming friendship with triune God – ¹⁴ *The amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.* (2Cor 13:14)
¹⁸ *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (2Cor 3:18)
- He intercedes for us – ²⁷ *And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.* (Rom 8:26-27)
- He counsels and coaches us – ²⁶ *But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.* (Jn 14:16-17)
- He leads and directs us – ³ *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.* (Jn 16:13)

- He reveals the Father to us – ¹⁵ *All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.* (Jn 16:15)

Our responsibility in this relationship:

¹⁸ *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be being filled with the Spirit...* (Eph 5:18)