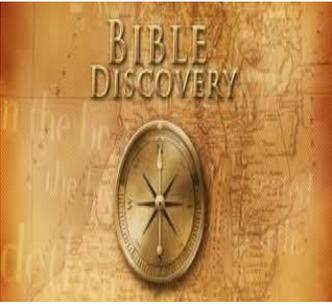


The Power of God's Spirit



Many times I've asked, *"How big is your God?"* The old gospel song, *How Big is God*, reminds us, *"This world's a room so small within my Master's house, the open sky's but a portion of his yard."* And the refrain tells us, *"He's big enough to rule his mighty universe, yet small enough to live within my heart!"* But, perhaps as we tell of how big God is, as we sing choruses describing His might, His glory, His all powerful presence, you've wondered how God has time for you, of how God can be with you giving you strength, comfort, compassion and love and everywhere else, with everyone else.

I'm not much for \$25 churchese words like *"omnipresent"* but it's amazing that God is exactly that – everywhere - while never losing sight of each and every one of His children's concerns. God meets our need because He's Spirit; He lives within our hearts as we surrender our lives and ask His Son Jesus to reside in us and lead us in His way. God's constantly present within us through His Holy Spirit given as a deposit on the promise of eternal life. Do you realize the Spirit's mentioned some 183 times alone in the New Testament revealing His work in all aspects of carrying out God's will for your life and mine? Today Without spending much time on all there is in God's Word to familiarize us with the Trinity – *Father, Son and Holy Spirit* – suffice to say His Word's sufficient for us to accept that the third person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit - wants to help us know with 100% certainty we're God's children as we *"draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith."* [Hebrews 10:22] At Romans 8:16, the Apostle Paul vividly describes the Holy Spirit as connecting us to God. If we've the Spirit of God, we're not strangers to God, we're not orphans, and we're not forgotten and left alone. Rather, we're adopted by God to be His children, belonging to His family. The Holy Spirit binds us, connects us to God's family, all in a spirit of bountiful grace. The Holy Spirit's also the One who inspired the scriptures, and He's the One who illuminates our minds so we discover relevance in God's Word – otherwise we remain blind finding the Bible a closed book – a mere block of wood. Here in John 16:13, Jesus says, *"When the Spirit of truth comes He will guide you to all truth."* The Apostle Paul speaks of the presence of God's Spirit, proclaiming, *"All scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* [2 Timothy 3:16-17] Peter draws us to the Spirit's work of inspiring the Word of God, stating, *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men of spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."* [2 Peter 1:21] **Today, what else does the Holy Spirit continue to do?**

God's Spirit Renews people's hearts

Just as when King David poured out his heart to God, confessing himself a sinner in need of God's grace and forgiveness, so too we see God's Spirit carries us before His throne of grace. David's heartfelt request is God not take His Spirit from him. Paul confirms that the Holy Spirit renews our hearts as he writes at Romans 5:5, *"the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* The Spirit works to renew our hearts several aspects of intervention in our lives...

- ✓ **God's Spirit Convicts of sin** - In our reading today, Jesus tells us the Spirit will *"convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."*
 - *In regard to sin because men do not believe in me* (Jesus). That's what sin does – it separates us from our Lord and blinds us to the truth of our own destruction.
 - *In regard to righteousness because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer.* Though Jesus earthly ministry would cease, reprove humankind of their sins, God, in His graciousness, didn't abandon us. As He renews our hearts, we're reprovved by His Spirit.
 - *In regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned.* Jesus, soon after He originally spoke these words would die, crying out; *"It is finished"* - sealing the Satan's fate once and for

all. Satan, the prince of the world, is the author of sin and those who reject Christ are following him in their unbelief, thus justly receiving the condemnation of God. The enemy would love to convince all it isn't so – but the devil lies. With hearts renewed through the Spirit's work, we're assured there's no place for Satan in our lives. He's finished; we're safe in our Saviour.

- ✓ **God's Spirit gives new birth** - The Apostle Paul explains it well as he writes to Titus, *"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."* [Titus 3:4-7] Having convicted us of sin, renewed our hearts, He then helps us understand and believe that Jesus died in our place to provide a "new birth" so that the old has passed away and all things in our life have become new. We are a new creation no longer tied to our old way but led by His Spirit.
- ✓ **God's Spirit lives within us** - The presence of God's Spirit is not a one-time event. He does not just touch our lives then leave us to fend for ourselves. Having brought about new birth in us, the Spirit remains permanently within us, allowing the presence of Christ to direct and lead us daily just as Jesus promised the Spirit would guide us, giving glory to Christ.
- ✓ **God's Spirit seals us** - In our current age through movies and pulp culture we hear much about *"the mark of the beast"* of Revelation for all who follow the Anti-Christ but do you realize you too are marked? You're sealed with the promised Holy Spirit showing you belong to God. Jesus says *"all that belongs to the Father is mine."* Not only all of knowledge and understanding but God's people belong to Jesus, sealed by the Holy Spirit. Paul instructs, *"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, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."* [Ephesians 1:13-14]

God's Spirit Reveals God's Truth and Will

Jesus taught us that when *"He, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."* [Vs. 13] This truth's not just about right doctrine, as important as that is –it's also about right living. There's little truth shown if we stand for what's right but remain arrogant and ungracious in doing so, or we preach holiness but live in secret sin. If I want to stand up for truth in the world, I must look to the Spirit to lead me, just as Paul did when confronted by a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet on the island of Cyprus who was trying to thwart the spread of the gospel. We're told, *"Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas"* (which means sorcerer) *"and said, 'you are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right.'" [Acts 13:9-10]* Paul was able to speak with knowledge and authority because what he needed to know was revealed as *he was filled with God's Spirit*. Our Heavenly Father God is the source of all truth and it's His plan the Lord Jesus carried out. Jesus repeatedly stated *He was doing the will of His Father*. God's Spirit then empowers us as believers, indwelling us and giving us **a new nature** in Christ. [2 Corinthians 5:17]

God's Spirit Anoints and Empowers People for Leadership

"God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called." I've that plaque in my study as a reminder it's God who anoints and empowers His people for leadership. Think of Samuel arriving at the home of Jesse to anoint one of his sons as Israel's next king. One by one seven sons are arrayed before Samuel and each time God says **"no"**. After they've all been paraded through, Samuel says to Jesse, *"The Lord has not chosen these; are these all the sons you have?"* First, it seems incredulous that not all the sons were invited to this significant event in for their family, but even more amazing that the young son, David, who was left to tend the sheep while all this went on, was indeed the son God would have Samuel anoint as king. At Samuel 16:13 we're reminded of what happens when God puts His hand on your life, *"from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power."* Again and again throughout scripture, throughout the ages of the church and throughout your life and mine, God's Spirit fills those who have been called empowering them. This is not something that just happens once; it's ongoing. The scriptures literally indicate we're to *"be continually filled"*. We too need to go on being

filled with God Himself. Devotion contributor, Ruth O'Reilly-Smith, reminds us even Moses was only able to follow God's commands to lead the people of Israel by the power of the Spirit [Numbers 11:17]. In the same way, God's Spirit enables us to grow in holiness and honour God [Romans 8:26]. When we try to obey God in our own strength, we fail miserably. The Holy Spirit provides what we need to stay in step with our Lord God. [Galatians 5:25]

God's Spirit Equips Those with Creative Skills for use by God

Just as God gave skill and talent to the many carpenters, masons, and artisans with the construction of an earthly temple for Israel many centuries ago, as Christians we bring our talents and skills while totally dependent on God's Spirit to help us live the Christian life. God's Spirit helps us to know and understand what He's provided for us; to recognize all He's given to us through His Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. God's Spirit comes as a counsellor rather than a creed so that we might serve Him in return. It's important to accept God doesn't call us all to be cookie-cutter copies of one another in our service. But He sets the example for instance, by not speaking of Himself; no, His ministry's to reveal God's Word, revealing the Father's truth to the world. As God's Spirit glorifies Jesus, He empowers and enables us to use the skills and talents we've been given to glorify the Lord Jesus too. God's Spirit takes what is the Lord's, revealing it to Jesus' disciples and subsequently to the world. Paul gives partial lists at Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians of different skills God's people may have. The key is that whatever talents the Lord has given to you success is found by letting *"the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes."* [Ephesians 4:23]

Matthew Henry's commentary on our scripture tells us, "Christ's departure was necessary to the Comforter's coming." Henry also challenges us, "It behoves everyone to ask, whether the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in his heart?" That's an excellent question each of us must ask. Because God's Spirit is eternal, the same Spirit that fell on the chosen of the Old Testament, the same Spirit which poured out on the believers of the first century church, the same Spirit which led and challenged saints throughout the last 2,000 years, is the same Spirit which equips you and me to know and serve our Lord Jesus today!

Foremost, God wants us to be 100% certain we're His children and we've received eternal life. Without such assurance, through God's Spirit, we miss the message of love, hope and peace poured out for us in Jesus and we miss out on the joy and direction for our lives today. May that not be so as we're filled with God's presence this day. Give us a call or throw us an email and let us know that you too are a child of God, filled with His Spirit and loved by Jesus.

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*Blessings,
Pastor Dave*