



INDWELT

The Presence of God In Us

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Sometimes, outrageous biblical truths become commonplace. God is constant in his kindness to bring these familiar truths alive again and again as we read the sacred script. Old truth becomes fresh truth as he opens our eyes “to behold wonderful things from the word” (Ps. 119:18).

“THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS A WINDOW INTO THE MAJESTY OF DIVINE SELFLESSNESS.”

These are things that have always been there, things we have read many times. He awakens us to truth we know, but don't know. This has been my experience this last month with one particular truth: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

There is a strange glory that surrounds the person of the Holy Spirit, a humble splendor. Graham Cole has said that the person and work of the Spirit is a window into “the majesty of divine selflessness.”

The Spirit's posture is one of tireless condescension and self-effacing service focused on the glory of Father and Son. The paradox of his glory is that you can't really see it. He is not interested in drawing attention to himself. He always works behind the scenes.

This paradox is evident in his work of breathing life into creation through the Son's speech. The wind blows where God wills but we do not know where it comes from or what it is doing.

We see this principle at work in his empowerment of prophets, priests, and kings. It is unclear to most where Samson gets his strength, where prophets get their words, and where kings get their wisdom.

The paradox is strong in the Spirit's role as the helper of Christ. He miraculously brings about the birth of the God-man. He fills, empowers, and guides the Son throughout his life and ministry. He upholds the Son on the cross enabling him to offer a perfect sacrifice to the Father. He raises Jesus from the grave and secures his victory over death.

“The distinctive, constant, basic ministry of the Holy Spirit under the new covenant is so to mediate Christ's presence to believers that three things keep happening. First, personal fellowship with Jesus. Second, personal transformation of character into Jesus' likeness. Third, the Spirit-given certainty of being loved, redeemed, and adopted.” – J.I. Packer

The Spirit is the quiet force behind the saving work of the Son. This unsung hero in our redemption refuses to sing about his contribution. He is only interested in singing the song of the Son (Jn 16:14). J.I. Packer gives a great illustration of this truth.

The Holy Spirit's distinctive new covenant role, then, is to fulfill what we may call a floodlight ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as this role was concerned, the Spirit 'was not yet' (John 7:39, literal Greek) while Jesus was on earth; only when the Father had glorified him (see John 17:5) could the Spirit's work of making men aware of Jesus' glory begin.

I remember walking to a church one winter evening to preach on the words 'he shall glorify me,' seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner, and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed.

When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them; you are not in fact supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained.

The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you see it properly. This perfectly illustrates the Spirit's new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder, on Jesus, who stands facing us. The Spirit's message is never, 'Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me,' but always 'Look at *him*, and see his glory; listen to *him*, and hear his word; go to *him*, and have life; get to know *him*, and taste his gift of joy and peace.'¹

The Spirit's condescension does not cease with the saving work of the Son. His humble service is ever

present in the life of the church and her individual members.

We could speak to his work of conviction, regeneration, guidance, comfort, empowerment, mortification, assurance and resurrection. All of these would reveal unique glimpses into God's grace and humility.

I am interested in addressing one particular area of the Spirit's gracious work: indwelling. The New Testament makes an absurd claim about God's residence. After Christ's ascension God makes his home *in* his people by his Spirit. The completion of God's saving project in Christ is sealed by a change of the Triune address.

Indwelling means that God moves beyond being *with* us and shocks us with the grace of being *in* us! Indwelling is about a divine address change! If this does not capture *amazing* grace I am not sure what does.

There are a number of New Testament passages that capture the theme of indwelling. We will explore these texts and conclude with implications. But before we jump into the New Testament we will take a look at one Old Testament text to set the stage.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27

"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

The Old Testament narrative is a lengthy illustration of the human need for divine intervention and transformation. Obedience to the law of God is found to be impossible apart from the grace of God.

This situation can only be remedied by the peculiar work of the Spirit of God. This text touches on the

¹ J.I. Packer, *Keeping in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*. (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, 2005), p. 57.

promise of his coming and the powerful change that follows his activity.

In the context, Ezekiel is describing what is elsewhere called the new covenant (Jer. 31). The new covenant is God's decisive plan to penetrate human recalcitrance and create joyful obedience.

The heart of the new covenant is the coming Spirit. In this text, it is the Spirit coming to *indwell* human beings. Twice the language of "within" is used to denote the intrinsic activity of God's Spirit.

The Spirit's coming is closely related to the heart surgery mentioned in the text. The old stony heart is removed with a soft responsive one.

Most impressive is the language of the Spirit "causing" individuals to gladly obey the commands of God. Indwelling grace is transformative grace. People are never the same when God takes up residence within them.

The possibility of obedience is created when the Spirit comes down. This is the new covenant promise picked up by the New Testament and explored in the following texts.

JOHN 14:16-17

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

John 14-17 has been traditionally called the "farewell discourse." Jesus is preparing his disciples for his coming departure. As to be expected, the disciples are anxious and concerned about their master leaving. Jesus aims to comfort and he does so by explicating some of the richest Trinitarian theology in all Scripture.

Jesus is leaving but the disciples will not be alone. He assures them that his effectual prayer will open

heaven and God's Helper will come down. The Spirit of truth will descend, an answered prayer, a divine gift.

The coming Spirit signals God's enduring support and presence. By the Spirit, God will now dwell eternally *with* his people. This text removes any possibility of divine withdrawal, for eternity.

"THE GIFT OF INDWELLING IS
ANOTHER DIMENSION IN GOD'S SELF
DONATION TO BROKEN, BELIEVING
HUMANITY."

John goes a step further. The eternal presence of God *with* us shifts to God *in* us. This is an unprecedented move. D.A. Carson captures this in his book on the farewell discourse.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Jesus' teaching in this passage, however, is that it is the *triune God* who takes up his dwelling in the disciples of Jesus. This truth is unavoidable: 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the *Spirit of Truth*.' . . . The Old Testament writers were concerned that God should live with men [citing 1 Kgs 8:27; Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10] . . . John insists that this occurred historically in the incarnation: 'The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us' (1:14). But now we are brought a stage further: this God reveals himself to the individual believer and takes up residence within him [citing 2 Cor 6:16; Lev 26:12; Jer 32:38; Ezek 37:27; Eph 3:16, 17a; Rev 3:14-21].²

The indwelling Spirit is an unparalleled gift. Jesus tells the disciples a little later that it exceeds even his incarnate presence with them (Jn 16:7). Who can fathom it? God residing in man!

Generosity has always characterized the one true God. He is ever giving the greatest gift to his

² D. A. Carson, *The Farewell Discourse* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 46-47.

creatures, himself. This is but another stage in God's self-donation to broken, believing humanity.

The text indicates the particular role of the Spirit as he indwells believers. He will be another helper. Like the Son of God he will serve and support. The text does not indicate specifics of his helping role. The rest of the New Testament helps us flesh this out.

A few verses later Jesus elaborates on the dynamic of indwelling. "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and *we* will come to him and *make our home* with him" (Jn 14:23).

The previous verses indicate the Spirit's residence within us. This verse expands the concept of indwelling to include the Father and Son. We are talking about the Trinity living within. God is indeed *with* us and now *in* us!

The implications are staggering. God has graciously welcomed us into his fellowship. More than that, he has stooped low and come to us. He has come knocking on our doors and has made himself a home within us.

Coming full circle we must remember that Jesus is speaking comfort to his disciples. The promise of indwelling is intended to bring confidence, peace, and hope. The doctrine is pastoral to the core.

ROMANS 8:9-11

"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

Paul's treatment of the Spirit's work is rich and nuanced in this text. Four times in three verses he uses language that firmly establishes the Spirit's vocation of indwelling the believer.

We learn five important things about indwelling from this text. First, Paul connects being "in" the Spirit with indwelling. The man who has the Spirit residing in him is always "in" the Spirit. This is a static reality, one does not move in and out of the Spirit.

Second, an inextricable link is made between the Spirit and Christ. Paul identifies the third person of the Trinity as the Spirit of Christ. He also equates Spirit's indwelling work with Christ's presence in us. The Spirit mediates the presence and work of Christ.

Third, indwelling is linked with belonging. The Spirit's presence in our lives communicates divine ownership. When God takes up residence by the Spirit we are secure in our adoption. The permanence of his new residence means that God will never leave or forsake us.

Fourth, the Spirit works life and righteousness in us in spite of our sin. The indwelling presence of God is a mighty force working our transformation. Change is inevitable for the person who has become the home of God.

Fifth, the promise of our resurrection is tied to the indwelling Spirit. The text's logic draws a link between the Spirit who raised Christ from the grave and that same Spirit who dwells in us. If he raised Christ, it is certain, he will raise us as well.

Resurrection, transformation, and belonging, these all flow from the Spirit's indwelling. The Spirit of Christ mediates the purposes and presence of Jesus in our lives. To be indwelt is to be permanently "in" the Spirit.

In this text alone we can see the significance of indwelling. Our current transformation, our future hope, and our status before God are dependent upon it. We cannot overstate the importance of the Spirit making his home in us.

2 TIMOTHY 1:4

“By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.”

Paul’s letter to Timothy is concerned with doctrinal fidelity and gospel centrality in the pastoral context. Paul practices what he preaches as he passes on what he has learned to faithful men (2 Tim 2:22).

Paul is making a disciple of Timothy. He opens his letter with a lofty exhortation grounded in the rich truth of indwelling.

In essence he states, “Timothy you have been tasked with protecting the message of the God-man who has come, died, and risen for our salvation. The Holy Spirit dwells in you and this is how you will accomplish your task.”

The Spirit takes up residence in believers for many reasons. In this text, his permanent residence in Timothy is connected to faithful ministry.

The Holy Spirit is devoted to safekeeping the message of Christ. This means he is strongly opposed to any false doctrine that would challenge the claims of Christ’s person and work.

His indwelling work aids the pastor by infusing his passion and devotion to doctrinal faithfulness. The Spirit protects the “good deposit” in and through the leaders of the church.

“THE SPIRIT’S INDWELLING
PRESENCE COMMUNICATES DIVINE
OWNERSHIP.”

One important implication of this truth is that the Spirit will labor within every believing individual to insure they hold fast to the central claims of Christianity.

The Spirit is fully aware that salvation depends on sound doctrine. Trusting a very specific individual who has done a very particular work is a salvific necessity.

Yet again the doctrine of indwelling is pastorally focused. This time, however, we learn how indwelling equips and empowers the pastor for his unique task and calling in service to the church.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

This is an important passage for the theme of indwelling as it situates the doctrine within an important redemptive historical theme, namely the temple.

The text indicates that the indwelling presence of God signals the establishment of a temple. The strands of this theme are evident throughout the storyline of Scripture.

God dwells with his people in Eden. When Eden is lost his saving presence is manifest as he indwells the tabernacle and then the temple. Temple means God’s presence with his people. This is why the destruction of the temple leading to exile was so horrific to the Hebrews.

In the New Testament the temple theme finds ultimate expression in the incarnation. Jesus is the new temple (Jn 2:19-21). God’s presence is manifest fully and perfectly in Christ.

By faith people are united with Christ, the Spirit is granted, and they become temples of the living God. This text points to individual believers as temples. The New Testament also connects the corporate people of God to the temple motif:

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God

will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Cor 3:16-17).

The presence of God is a reality in the church, the body of Christ. It is also a reality in the physical bodies of believers. Temple language is always connected to indwelling, ruling and covenant faithfulness. These are realities to which we are now deeply connected.

One implication and one imperative flow from the doctrine of indwelling in this text. The implication is that we do not belong to ourselves. We are not our own.

We were purchased at the cross and sealed as God's possession by indwelling. God has made us his own through the blood of his Son and the home-making of his Spirit. Every square inch of our bodies belong to another.

The imperative attached to indwelling is the call to glorify God in our bodies. These bodies belonging to God are to be used for his honor and pleasure.

The doctrine of indwelling is a game changer. It forever alters our sense of identity and compels to live in a way fitting of someone who is literally a residence of the divine.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:21-22

"And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."

This text locates the Spirit in the heart of the believer. Here indwelling is linked to two important theological concepts. First, Paul connects anointing to indwelling. Anointing has a rich biblical history.

Throughout the Old Testament the language of anointing was used to set apart objects and individuals for particular tasks determined by God. Certain items used in the sacrificial system were anointed for holy usage (Lev 8:10).

Certain individuals were anointed for specific tasks related to God's purposes. For example, certain kings (1 Sam 16:13), prophets (1 Kgs 19:16), and priests (Ex 40:15) were anointed to carry out their vocations to the glory of God.

The anointing of people was coupled with the Spirit's presence and empowerment. The anointing communicated that the Spirit was with individuals empowering them to fulfill their God-given role (1 Sam 16:13).

This anointing motif comes to a head in the work of Jesus. His title "the Christ" literally means anointed one and Messiah. He was the subject of Isaiah's words in the following passage (cf. Lk 4:18).

"THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT
UNIVERSALIZES ANOINTING TO
INCLUDE THE ENTIRETY OF THE
COVENANT PEOPLE."

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Is 61:1-2).

Jesus is the anointed servant of God tasked with saving the world. His work is enabled by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Through his death and resurrection he secures our redemption. In his ascension and exaltation he shares the Spirit with his people (Acts 2:33).

The Spirit now anoints *all* believers without exception. The indwelling of the Spirit universalizes anointing to include the entirety of the covenant people.

The task assigned the new covenant people is to expand the kingdom of God by bringing the gospel to all nations. The Spirit's empowering presence assures the fulfillment of the mission.

The second theological concept in this text tied to indwelling is sealing and guaranteeing. The coming of the Spirit to live within us is equivalent to God setting his seal of ownership upon us.

The text identifies God as the "one sealing us." The Father is the subject of this sealing, the actor in our text. Believing humans are the objects of this sealing. God seals, believers are sealed. God is active; we are passive.

God's seal is God's guarantee that we are his people and he is our God. It is the tangible expression of his inviolable promise of mutual ownership.

The gift of indwelling creates a new language. The name of God and possessive pronouns now belong in the same sentence. He is "your" God. He is "our" God. He is "my" God. Even more, we are "his" people!

The doctrine of indwelling is a rich source of encouragement in this passage. It communicates the permanent empowering presence of the Spirit for the tasks to which we are called.

It speaks of the assurance of belonging to God through his seal and guarantee. It opens up a bold new language that forever alters our identity and resituates reality.

GALATIANS 4:6-7

"And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."

Paul builds an important bridge between indwelling and adoption in this passage. Recognition of sonship and the vertical address of Father are rooted in the Spirit taking up residence in our souls.

There is a trinitarian dynamic in this text. It is the Father who sends the Spirit, but not just any spirit, the Spirit of the Son. The grace of indwelling is as we have seen elsewhere the gift of the Triune God.

The text tells us that a change in status ushers in the indwelling Spirit. It is 'because' of our new status as sons/daughters, a reality created by the cross-work of the Son, that the Spirit descends.

The objective status of sonship becomes our subjective experience by the Spirit's indwelling. His coming gives us a new voice and a new language. Boldly we cry 'Abba Father.' Once alienated and enslaved to sin we now speak like we belong. The Spirit makes this possible.

Indwelling communicates adoption, which means we are sons and daughters (Rom 8:15). Belonging to the family means we are written into the Father's inheritance, we are heirs. The Spirit's residence within assures that God will share all that is his with us!

OTHER KEY TEXTS

Most discussions on indwelling appropriately focus on the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it is important to see a number of texts that connect indwelling to Christ. In fact, the New Testament is quite clear that the indwelling Spirit is the mediator of Christ's presence with his people. Jesus indwells us *by means* of the Spirit.

Take for example Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19. His request to God is that the church would be:

Strengthened with power through his *Spirit in your inner being*, so that *Christ may dwell in your hearts* through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The link is clear. Christ dwells in the heart as the Spirit resides in the inner being. Now take a look at these texts that speak of Christ indwelling his people.

- “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and *I in you*” (John 14:20).
- “If *Christ is in you*, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness” (Romans 8:10).
- “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but *Christ who lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20).
- “To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).
- “The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that *He abides in us*, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:24).
- “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that *Christ Jesus is in you*—unless, of course, you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).
- “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for *he who is in you* is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

The Spirit mediates the presence of Jesus. His coming carries on and extends the work that Christ began. Jesus promised that he would never leave his people. He fulfills this promise in part through the Holy Spirit’s presence.

The same principle can be seen in connection to God the Father. Take a look at 1 John 4:13-16.

By this we know that we abide in him and *he in us*, because he has given us of his Spirit...Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son

of God, *God abides in him*, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and *God abides in him*.

God the Father abides in his people through his Spirit. Indwelling is a Trinitarian dynamic as we have seen throughout this study.

The text that best captures this comes from a text we briefly looked at earlier, John 14:23. “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and *we* will come to him and *make our home* with him.” By the Spirit the Father and Son reside within those who believe.

THE NEED FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

We have looked at New Testament passages that have explicit language of indwelling and divine homemaking. We have only touched the surface of this wonderful truth. There is much to be explored to grasp the larger context, the corporate and individual dimensions and the interconnected themes that contribute to an understanding of indwelling.

To move in this direction one would do well to develop a broader theology of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. This would bring one in contact with the important themes of revelation, filling, empowerment, baptism, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, justification, anointing, gifts and mission.

This approach would also connect the theme of indwelling to the nature of the Spirit’s work as counselor, comforter, missionary, helper, sanctifier, life-giver, teacher, leader, truth-revealer, grace-giver and faith-upholder.

One would also benefit from exploring metaphors and themes that touch indwelling, some of which have been mentioned above. Here are a few examples.

Doctrines

- The doctrine of the Trinity
- The doctrine of vocation
- The doctrine of regeneration
- The doctrine of adoption
- The doctrine of sanctification
- The doctrine of baptism
- The doctrine of intercession
- The doctrine of resurrection

Metaphors

- Streams of living waters flowing from within (Jn 7:38-39)
- Treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:6-7)
- The new birth (Jn 1:13, 3:1-8)
- The new heart (Ez 36:26)
- God's presence in the temple (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19-20, Eph 2:22,)
- Baptism in the Spirit (Matt 3:11, Acts 1:15)
- The breathing of the Spirit on/in creatures (Gen 2:, Jb 33:4, Jn 20:22)
- The theme of abiding (1 Jn 3:23, 4:13)
- Circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6, Ez 11:19, Rom 2:29)
- The body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-13).

These examples highlight the fact that we have only scratched the surface of this doctrine. There is much more to be seen. In conclusion, we will take a look at the practical side of indwelling.

WHAT DOES IT MATTER? EXPLORING THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF INDWELLING

We have seen that indwelling is the merciful commitment of the Father and Son to send the Holy Spirit to take up residence within those who trust the gospel.

Indwelling is the stunning reality that God the Trinity lives within us and refuses to ever leave us. We have explored a number of texts in the New and Old Testaments that communicate this peculiar doctrine.

This final section will draw together various strands of the study and identify practical implications. I

want to get at how this truth impacts us on a very basic level.

I believe indwelling is a rich resource for biblical application and practical theology. Connecting the dots between theory and practice moves us into the realm of transformation.

When we grasp what indwelling truly means for us it becomes clear that life cannot remain same, something *must* change. The following summary statements contain the language of command. This is intentional.

The reason for this is my belief that doctrine captures and compels. When we are moved, we move. The must of obedience flows out of a place of gratitude and awe.

Our understanding of the presence of God must be impacted. God's immediate presence throughout the biblical storyline was connected to the garden, tabernacle, temple, Christ, the church, and individual believers. The new covenant signals a shift in experiencing the immediate presence of God, from external to internal, temporary to permanent.

The incarnation was God's strong way of saying, "I am with you." Indwelling is his affirmation, "I am in you." Could the High One come any lower? Can God get any closer? God's nearness is now a static reality; the Spirit is no renter. He is here to stay. We have been purchased and our name now becomes a divine address.

His presence is a reality from morning to night, in all our conversations, while we work, when we play, in our sin, in our joy, in our faith, in our doubt, he is always with and in us. When we grapple with the question that we all do, "where are you God?" the doctrine of indwelling needs a voice.

Our appreciation of the cross and resurrection must grow. The coming of the Holy Spirit was inseparable from the new covenant. The new covenant was God's promise of transformation, forgiveness, and his permanent presence.

This covenant was enacted through the perfect life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ purchased the gift of indwelling. Without the cross indwelling would not and could not happen. Indwelling then is another wonderful dimension of God's love and kindness flowing from his cross.

The empty tomb is no different. Only a victorious, reigning King could commission the Spirit to complete the work he began on the earth. When we worship God for the kindness of residing in us we must never forget that the cross and resurrection made this promise a reality.

Our worship of the Triune God must be heightened. Indwelling is not solely the work of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament indicates that he takes the lead in this work, but he is not alone. God the Father and God the Son are said to join the Spirit in this new residential endeavor. This makes sense theologically when we consider the absolute unity of the Trinity while still holding to the distinction of persons.

Consider the tremendous humility of God the Father, Son, and Spirit. Not only does God humbly create us and graciously redeem us, he comes to live within us! Leaving the throne room of heaven he takes up residence in his creatures.

Consider the tremendous passion of God in his love for us, his commitment to change us, his willingness to be present with us! The doctrine of indwelling is fuel on the fire of intelligent and passionate worship. How could it be any other way?

Our thoughts on belonging and assurance must be deepened. The theme of belonging runs through this doctrine like a thread. The New Testament makes the connection between God's residence in us and his ownership of us.

God is deeply interested in giving his people assurance and confidence in their status before him. This status has objective and subjective dimensions. Through the cross work of Christ we are justified and declared righteous through Christ. Through Christ the Father views us as blameless, perfect, and sinless. This is an objective reality that we believe by faith.

Faith stumbles on this truth because our subjective experience is not yet consistent with our position before God. This is where the Holy Spirit comes into the picture.

The New Testament helps us understand that the Holy Spirit translates objective truths into subjective experience. In other words, through the cross God guarantees our forgiveness and righteousness. The Spirit then helps us experience the love of God behind the cross and instill in us certainty of the grace given us there.

Through indwelling the Spirit is a constant companion working into our hearts confidence, assurance, hope, and helping us hold fast to the truth that we are sons and daughters of God. He helps us feel and know what is true.

Our dependence on the Spirit in gospel ministry must mature. The Indwelling Spirit requires a reframing of how we think about and do ministry. The New Testament is plain. Doctrinal faithfulness, empowerment and moral integrity are all grounded in the Spirit who lives in us.

Cultivating this understanding leads to quiet trust and precise dependence on God the Spirit. For

example, times of study, prayer, writing, preaching, counseling, and conversation can be engaged with a posture of reliance and listening.

The acknowledgment that God is close and present to support gospel advancement and ministry changes everything. This awareness, designated as "keeping in step with the Spirit" (Eph 5:25), is a tremendous encouragement for those called to be ambassadors for Christ in any ministry context.

Ministry can be painful. We strive to proclaim unpopular truth, attend to the sick, preach impossible funerals, engage in painstaking conversations, and implement gut-wrenching church discipline all while maintaining gospel fidelity.

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that equips and enables us to complete these tasks. Fruitful ministry is marked by desperation for the Spirit's involvement.

Consistently recognizing our dependence on the Spirit, verbalizing our need for him and being thankful for his help moves us toward ministry maturity.

Saint Augustine gives us an example of reliance and prayerful dependence on the Spirit.

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.

Our conviction and grief regarding sin must be deepened. The nearness of God evidenced through indwelling must move us away from abstract thinking on sin. The personal nature of indwelling necessitates a personal view of sin.

Scripture asserts that the Holy Spirit can be grieved, quenched, and angered. He also groans, suffers and hurts. These emotions are most often connected to his relationship with people.

We are very capable of bringing pain to God the Spirit. The primary way we do this is by our disobedience and sin, defined as breaking God's law.

Wrongdoing is most often practiced in the dark. At least we deceive ourselves into thinking our actions are unseen. Indwelling exposes this falsehood.

Sin is always done in the immediate presence of God the Spirit. He knows, sees, and hears all. The sobering reality of this fact is deepened when one recalls that all sin is ultimately against God (Ps 51:4).

In the judicial context wrongdoing is most effectively confronted when the wrongdoer comes face to face with the person he has wronged. There is power in seeing the personal impact of our actions.

These dynamics are not hypothetical for the Christian. The Spirit actually resides within us and is impacted by us. Recognition and awareness of his presence will interrupt our sin patterns and invoke a lifestyle of repentance.

The following prayer is an example of engaging the Spirit in repentance. This was originally written to commemorate the experience of the disciples in waiting for the Spirit at Pentecost.

O Holy Spirit, O my God, I adore Thee, and acknowledge, here in Thy divine presence, that I am nothing and can do nothing without Thee...Take from my heart whatever is not pleasing to Thee, and make of it a worthy dwelling-place for Thyself. Illumine my mind that I may see and understand the things that are for my eternal good. In flame my heart with pure love of Thee, that I may be cleansed from the dross of all inordinate attachments, and that my whole life may be hidden with Jesus in God. Strengthen my will that I may be made

conformable to Thy divine will, and be guided by Thy holy inspirations.

Our definition of humility must be refined.

Humility is central to the character of God. God's gift of his Son, the Son's gracious visitation and the Spirit's coming all point us in this direction. Humility characterizes all God does.

We can see this at work in the doctrine of indwelling. Humility is the best descriptor of a God who comes to dwell in his people. In our study we have seen that the Spirit is the quiet, selfless presence behind the great acts of God. He is also the one who is sent to reside within us.

The Holy Spirit is tremendously humble. His work of indwelling requires a reworking of our understanding of humility. Humility through the lens of indwelling looks like sacrifice, selflessness, service and lack of concern for recognition.

The Spirit's willingness to live within fractured people and indwell uncomfortable space is meekness at its best. Humility is quiet, other-focused, committed and at times painful. As our attitudes and actions reflect the Holy Spirit true humility is demonstrated.

Our view of transformation must be broadened.

The doctrine of indwelling provides an instructive entry point to the theme of transformation. The Holy Spirit's work in us is always active. He is not a passive tenant but an energetic owner.

He works tirelessly to persevere our faith, compel our obedience, assure us of God's love and conform us into the image of Christ. The Spirit is the active force and presence in all aspects of our transformation.

The theme of indwelling also helps us think about our role in the change process. The fact that the

energetic Spirit lives in us helps us grasp that our role contains both passive and active elements.

The Spirit takes up residence in us and begins the remodeling process. He tears down walls, adds on rooms, retiles floors, and paints. He does not leave us as we are. His indwelling presence means transformation. We simply receive in this process.

At the same time, the New Testament is clear that change is also collaborative. We actively partner with the Spirit in the transformation process. We do this by removing barriers to his work, following in step with his guidance and striving to obey God's word.

Imperatives in Scripture speak to the responsibility we have in our transformation. The tension of this passive/active dynamic is captured in Paul's injunction to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph 5:18). This is an imperative and yet the content of the command requires passive receptivity.

Indwelling touches this tension and helps us understand that activity and passivity converge in the work of transformation. We must learn to live in the paradox.

Our hope and certainty in the future must be

strengthened. The power of the Holy Spirit residing in us is evident when we look at our promised future. The New Testament is clear, resurrection awaits. This is our hope. As Graeme Goldsworthy would say, our resurrection is "future history." It is certain.

The doctrine of indwelling is an anchor of the soul as we consider this hope. The Spirit is responsible for living in Christ and raising him from the dead. He is responsible for creating life out of nothing, for breathing that creative breath on the Son that enabled him to walk out of the tomb the third day.

This same Spirit now dwells in us and guarantees that he will bring life to our mortal bodies. He insures that death will not have the final word. Resurrection is coming and the Holy Spirit is responsible for making it happen.

There are many uncertainties when it comes to the future, but the most important things are not up for grabs when the Holy Spirit resides in us.



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