SCRIPTURE:
“Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.” —2 Corinthians 5:16, NRSV

MEDITATION: DISCERNING MY GIFTS AND CALLING IN THE WAKE OF PENTECOST

Christ concluded the last supper with words of promise about the coming gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–31). His last sacramental meal with the disciples thus placed them at the precarious intersection between two ages: the old dispensation of Moses, and the new era of the Holy Spirit. To usher in this new age of the Holy Spirit, he must first suffer many things alone as foretold by the prophets.

Jesus suffered on the cross alone, he was raised alone, and he ascended to the Father alone. Yet, he performed this work of redemption as a representative for us all; and as Paul was later to declare, “When he ascended on high ...., he gave gifts to his people” (Eph. 4:8). These gifts are exhibited in all their rich complexity in the work of the Holy Spirit through all the history of the church from the Apostles and early church to our time.

The Ascension, followed by Pentecost, ushered in an utterly new reality for the Apostles, and all who were to believe their proclamation. Before Pentecost Christ dwelt with them; after Pentecost he will dwell in them (John 14:17). Although it had been a great privilege to know Christ in the flesh; it was now an even a greater privilege to know him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

With the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the disciples came to know Jesus in a way that had completely eluded them before. They now knew him not simply as a unique individual (the Son of Man), but as the true vine, the head cornerstone, the first fruits of the new creation (cf. Rom. 8:23). It is now our unique privilege to know Christ in this way.

As Jesus explained, I will come to you because the Holy Spirit will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 14:16–18). Though he must depart in the flesh of his resurrected body to sit at the right hand of God, he comes now to the Apostles (and all who will believe) in the power of the indwelling Spirit.

The dynamics of this new era are captured by Paul where he prays that the Father may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ...” (Eph. 3:16–17).

From now on the Son’s identify is shaped by the Spirit, and the Spirit’s is shaped by the incarnate Son’s ministry, and now we are being shaped into Christ’s likeness by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17–18). The vision that emerges here is astounding.
The Father welcomed back the Son in a triumphal procession that surpasses the glory they shared in each other before all ages. Now the Son has taken his rightful place on the throne not only as God, but also as one of us, an anticipation of our future state. We are called now to serve our generation through the renewing of our minds, to bring every thought captive to this new reality (Rom. 12:2; cf. 2 Cor. 10:5).

SONG: “Spirit of the Living God” by Audrey Assad https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fylsIaNsJ5o

REFLECTION:

1. How do I discern my unique gifts?
2. How do I nurture my unique gifts into a life-long vocation?
3. How can the ASA/CSCA help me in the discernment of my gifts and vocation?

PRAYER: Now to him who by the power [of the Holy Spirit] at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20–21).

FOR FURTHER READING:
*The Letter to the Ephesians*


ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Don earned his BA McMaster (1972) and MA (1975) and PhD (1982) at the University of Toronto in the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology. He chaired the curriculum committee as part of the establishment of Redeemer College in Ancaster (1979–1981); established a program in science and religion at St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto (1986–1998); co-founded the Pascal Centre for Advanced Studies in Faith and Science, Redeemer College (1988–1992); founded NetAccess Systems Inc. (1993–ongoing); co-directed the John Templeton Foundation Science and Religion Course Program Summer Workshop at Victoria College, the University of Toronto (1996–1999); served as Executive Director of the CSCA (2003–2018); helped establish the Hamilton Area Science and Faith Forum at McMaster University (2005–ongoing); is a founding member of the Hamilton area Corporate Executive Network (2008–ongoing); and is an appointed board member of Innovation Factory (2012–current).

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