

The Trinity

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children forever (Deuteronomy 29:29)

“God is incomprehensibly complex, yet intimately knowable” (Tony Pierson)

God is Triune – Three in One

“The basic concept of the Trinity is that the LORD is one God in three persons and three persons in one God. The persons are distinct, but not separate, and are all equally of one essence or nature.” Dr Dennis Mock

The truth that God is one is seen in these verses:

- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)
- I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God (Isaiah 45:5)
- God is one (Romans 3:30)
- There is one God (1 Timothy 2:5)
- You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder! (James 2:19)

We also see the truth of the distinct persons of the trinity throughout scripture...and you can begin to see how each have their own roles and therefore we interact with each of them uniquely:

- At Jesus' baptism: And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17)
- As part of the Great Commission “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19)

The New Testament Letters reference the trinity frequently:

- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- Pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 20-21)

We join with the confession of the Apostles Creed (140 AD) and stand on this truth: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

The Trinity is Eternal

We see the Trinity present at creation:

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth....And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1:1-2)
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

Jesus refers to the eternal nature of the Trinity on John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

The Trinity is not isolated to the NT.

There are multiple examples of an “Angel of God” or a “Messenger of God” in which the messenger is referred to as being sent by God, but also as God himself. Some of these passages are Moses and the Burning Bush and when God is leading his people out of Egypt.

Jude 5 says it explicitly like this “Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt....”

Perfect Love Exists in The Trinity

Another profound and extremely important truth is that perfect love exists in the Trinity. The three members of the Godhead exist in perfect relationship. And love is the essence of this relationship.

Here are some verses where we find these truths:

Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. (John 17:5)

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:26)

[The Spirit] will glorify me [Jesus], for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16:14)

Also see it at Jesus baptism “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”

This also connects to the importance of there being three persons in the Trinity...because if God was singular, then his essence could not be love. CS Lewis said it like this:

All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that ‘God is love’. But they seem not to notice that the words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.....

...[Christians] believe that the living, dynamic activity of love has been going on in God forever and has created everything else.

And that, by the way, is perhaps the most important difference between Christianity and all other religions: that in Christianity God is not a static thing—not even a person—but a dynamic, pulsating activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance.

Created in the Image of the Triune God

Here's why this is so important and how it applies to us: We have been created in the image of the Triune God.

Genesis 1:26 – Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” – We have been created in the image of the Triune God.

Our ideas and beliefs about the importance of having a relationship with God, being in community with other believers are founded in the truth that the three persons of the trinity exist in perfect love and perfect relationship with each other.

And out of the overflow of this love and relationship, you and I were created.

We are wired for love and community because we have been made in the image of the Triune God.

Expounding on the CS Lewis quote, another pastor adds this:

*You get the Father lavishing majesty, exaltation and glory onto the Son, while the Son glorifies the Spirit, while the Spirit glorifies the Father. And so you get this community within the Godhead that overflows onto the canvas of creation. Every other religion in the world would state that god, whatever god is, began the earth, began the universe with an act of power. There couldn't be love, because there would be no one to love before He created. There couldn't be anything like community, because nothing existed but the singular god. Well in our faith, what we believe to be truth is that God is triune in nature and that out of this community, out of this love....God creates man and woman in His image, communal, so that we **might be invited into the dance.** So we have been invited into an intimate, personal relationship with the God of the universe. (Matt Chandler)*

First Person – God the Father

The first person of the trinity is God the Father.

The first person of the trinity is called “Father” because he is the **initiator and source of heaven's love.**

This has lots of implications for us, but the main one I want us to focus on, is that:

In his perfect love, God the Father initiates, provides, and is the source of our redemption.

The plan of redemption from eternity past belongs to God the Father.

He does this by sending the Son – Jesus.

For God so loved the world, that he **gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not **send his Son** into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who **sent me** John 6:38

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him Isaiah 53:10 another translation says It pleased the LORD to bruise him

How could it please God the Father to crush and bruise his son?

Because it is the love of the Father for you and me that sends the Son to the cross.

Second Person – God the Son

The second person of the trinity, is God the Son....Jesus Christ. The Son One of the Son's primary roles is to be the mediator between God the Father and man. He is the person in the trinity **responsible for implementing, for carrying out the Father's plan of redemption.**

In John 14, we see some examples of how he does this:

- Jesus reveals the Father to us – He shows us who God is “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9)
- Jesus bring us to the Father – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (14:6) – The Cross

God the Father and God the Son live in perfect relationship

And this is good news for us because our salvation depends on how God the Son responds to God the Father.

The Son responds to the Father with submission and sacrifice.

He submits to the Father's plan, to the will of the Father, by leaving his heavenly status, coming into our world, and sacrificing his life, in our place, on the cross.

The love of God the Father is made known to us, is brought to us, is available to us only because of the submission and sacrifice of God the Son.

Third Person – God the Holy Spirit

The third person of the trinity is God the Holy Spirit

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6)

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in you.

And God has always been present among his people. He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden, he was present with Israel in the Old Testament, He was physically present in the incarnation of Jesus, and now, **we experience his presence through his spirit.**

Closing Encouragement from Jesus:

“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:24-26)

Jesus continues to make known the Father and his plans to us, through the holy spirit, so that we may taste the first fruits of communion with God and each other, serve together, live on mission together, pour our lives out together, all as we look forward to the day of experiencing the fullness of our triune God.