

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Trinity: Basic Truths, Pt. 3
Selected Passages

Keywords: Trinity, God, Theology Proper, Plurality

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

Sermon Audio Blurb: This sermon moves the examination of the doctrine of the Trinity from the reality of God's oneness to the other fact that God describes Himself in a plural manner. This is all designed to establish a solid foundation for the examination of each person of the Trinity.

DISMISS

I. Introduction.

- A. Today we will look at the New Testament to continue to develop the doctrine of the Trinity.
- B. We have so far seen the oneness of God.
 - 1. Unique. Alone/no other.
 - 2. A foundational doctrine that cannot be underestimated in its importance.
 - a. Salvation.
 - b. Worship.
 - c. Christian living.
 - d. Judgement and hell.
- C. Secondly, we have looked at many O.T. passages seeing that plurality within the Godhead was pervasive throughout.
- D. I want us to now move into the N.T. to see how these truths are simply magnified and clarified for us. It is here that we see the triune nature come into clear focus.
 - 1. It is important for you to remember that some of the O.T. passages we looked at were messianic in nature.

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2. In other words, they were speaking about the coming Messiah and they called Him God/Yahweh.
3. Therefore, when we come to the N.T. and see Jesus, who is the Messiah, we must attach that meaning to Him....He is God.

II. Basic Affirmation of The Trinity.

A. Thoughts about Common Analogies for The Trinity.

1. Whenever we try to speak about the Trinity we find ourselves floundering to describe Him.
2. Historically, there has been attempts to use analogies to help us see the truth of the Trinity.
 - a. Tree (wood, leaves, sap).
 - b. Water (liquid, steam, ice).
 - c. Egg (shell, white, yolk)
 - d. Shamrock.
3. There are problems with all of these, plus all the others that exist.
 - a. When using them you can easily end up teaching either 3 gods, or modalism. Both of which are heretical.
4. It is my opinion that it is very unwise to attempt to use any created thing to describe God.
 - a. This is the whole point of not having any graven image.
 - b. Nothing exists that can properly define God in any object.
 - c. When we are talking about the Trinity, we are talking about God's essential nature.
 - (1) **Exodus 15:11**, "Who is like Thee among the gods, O LORD? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?" (The Song of Moses after the salvation through the Red Sea).
 - (2) **Psalms 71:19**, "For Thy righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, Thou who hast done great things; O God, who is like Thee?"

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(3) **Psalm 113:1-6**, “Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD From this time forth and forever. From the rising of the sun to its setting The name of the LORD is to be praised. he LORD is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens. Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, **Who humbles Himself** to behold The things that are in heaven and in the earth?”

(4) **Isaiah 44:6-7**, “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. 'And who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place.”

d. The overriding thought behind these passages is that there is nothing and no one like God. Therefore, why try to find something that is like Him?

(1) Beloved, you may or may not agree with me on this. But will you give this some thought?

(2) What have you really achieved in the discussion of the Trinity by saying that it is sort of like the 3 leaf clover or water?

(3) All you really do is bring the mind down from a glorious mystery to some created object.

(4) And anyone who then says, “Oh, I see,” really doesn’t.

e. It is my belief that we give far greater glory to the Lord by declaring the truth of the Trinity and then cry out, “Who like Thee oh God!”

B. *N.T. References to God’s Plurality.*

1. Matthew 3:16-17.

a. In the preceding verses, Jesus has come to where John the Baptist is working.

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- b. John has already confronted the Pharisees who have come to observe his work of baptism. The flow of the text indicates that they refused to be baptized, especially since it would have been an indication that they needed to repent.
- c. Christ desires to be baptized (13ff) and in verse 15 gives His reason for doing so.
 - (1) “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”
 - (2) Christ was entering into his public ministry.
 - (3) The whole purpose of this ministry was directed toward His work on the Cross.
 - (4) In John’s gospel, we have John the Baptist crying out, upon seeing Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”
 - (5) Whereas the Pharisees were holding onto their sinfulness, Christ was already displaying Himself as the One who would be the One true substitute for the payment for our sins.
 - (6) In all ways Jesus identified with the people of Israel. A beautiful picture of His humiliation in contrast to the religious leaders’ arrogance.
- d. It is here, having been baptized that we see the one of the clearest examples of the trinity.
 - (1) We have Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the voice from heaven who could only be the Father since He calls Jesus His Son.
 - (2) For the Jew, this would be very powerful. In Psalm 2 which speaks of the promised Messiah, God say, “Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee.”
- e. This passage is so clear and so important that a saying was created, “Go to the Jordan and you will see the Trinity.” (Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 1:263)

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2. Matthew 28:19.
 - a. This is such a well known passage that for some the theological significance can be missed.
 - b. Again we have the Trinity given. This passage is even more powerful due to the grammatical construction of the text.
 - c. Of course the passage is describing what is known as the great commission.
 - (1) Most of you already know there is only one verb in the command found in verses 19-20—“make disciples.”
 - (a) It is done by going, baptizing, and teaching.
 - (b) Mark 16 tells us that the “going” speaks of preaching the gospel it self.
 - (2) In a nutshell, this is what defines a disciple. All three are to be present. We have no freedom to remove any one of these points out of the formula.
 - d. But in this passage we also have a very powerful statement regarding the Trinity.
 - (1) Note the phrase, “. . . in the name of . . .” This is in the singular.
 - (a) There is only one name.
 - (b) But then He gives us three names.
 - (2) In the Greek Jesus has attached the definite article to each name. That repetition is not just words, but a way of emphasis on co-equality.
 - (a) This is very similar to the passages in Genesis and Isaiah, where we have the word, “Us” linked with singular words, like “image” or “likeness.”
 - (b) Here, therefore, we have both the unity and plurality expressed without embarrassment or explanation. Jesus is very comfortable with this concept.

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- (c) Makes all three person equal in authority and essence/nature.
- 3. Luke 1:30-35.
 - a. Here is the announcement to Mary.
 - b. Much here that we cannot go into.
 - c. Suffice it to say that we have God choosing Mary. The baby to be in her womb is no average baby, but the Messiah Himself. The statement about sitting on the throne of David makes that clear (remembering that the Messiah would be the one to do so and the O.T. shows him to be God). And then we have the Holy Spirit coming upon her.
- 4. John 14:16-26.
 - a. Christ, the Spirit, and the Father.
 - b. All distinct from one another.
 - c. Remember a few weeks ago how I spoke concerning the meaning of “another” in verse 16.
 - (1) Therefore, if Christ is a person, then so is the Holy Spirit. Not just a force.
 - d. You see throughout this passage not just a distinction between the three, but also clear evidences of personality. But also equality. The Spirit, the Son , and the Father all dwell within a believer.
- 5. John 17:11, 21-23.
 - a. In verse 11 there is a request of the Son that the church would be kept in unity.
 - b. I don’t have the time today to tear this all apart, but suffice it to say that the Lord desires that all who are his to be kept in the Father’s name.
 - (1) Two different ways that could be taken.
 - (2) It seems best to see it as speaking of the church remaining loyal and faithful to who God is.

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- (3) This name of God is seen in its fullest in Jesus Christ. And the only way that they can be kept in this manner is if they remain faithful to the One who is the perfect expression of the Father, Jesus Christ.
 - (4) Just as Jesus was faithful to always display the Father to all who watched, He is asking the Father to continue to disclose Himself after Jesus goes to heaven.
 - (5) The purpose of this request is that the church would be one. There would be a unity that pervades the entire church in a continuous manner.
 - (6) This is not just a unity of purpose, but a unity of existence. It is built off of the unity that is part of the Son and the Father.
 - (a) To see the Son is to see the Father.
 - (b) To see the Son do things is to see the Father do things.
 - (c) Not just because Jesus cooperated with the Father.
- c. Verse 21-23 shows the intimate relationship of the two.
- (1) This is a glorious passage for it speaks of the utter closeness that the Church enjoys with God Himself.
 - (2) We see the Father in the Son and the Son in the Father and the Church in both of them.
 - (3) Yes they are one, but they are also distinguishable.
 - (4) This speaks of equality of being for both of them and shows us that we partake of that relationship because we are in them!
6. 1 Cor. 2:10-12.
- a. Here we see a similar unity between God and the Spirit.
 - b. Only the Spirit is capable of revealing the mind of God. Nothing else can.

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- c. Why? Because, according to verse 12, the Spirit proceeds from (ek) the Father. A picture of inter-relationship. Much like Christ's statement in John 17:21, "I in you and you in me."
- 7. 1 Cor. 6:11.
 - a. Here we see again the triune nature.
- 8. 1 Cor. 12:4-6.
 - a. Here again the Triune expression.
 - b. Notice verses 11-18 on how all three just flow within the text.
- 9. 2 Cor. 13:14.
 - a. Here Paul gives us a benediction.
 - b. Similar to the great commission. Paul is giving each one of them distinction and yet also equality.
- 10. Ephesians 1:3-14.
 - a. This passage is triune in its construction. By the way, this triune style of constructing passages is actually rather common.
 - b. Verses 3-6 speaks of the Father's work.
 - (1) Blessed us with every spiritual blessing. (3)
 - (2) Chose those whom He desired to save (4). But not in some vague way
 - (3) Lovingly predestined those chosen to be adopted as sons—His sons (5)!
 - (4) For the goal that His grace would be made known and we would praise Him alone for His saving work (6).
 - c. Verses 7-12 speaks of Christ's works.
 - (1) It is Christ who redeems us from the penalty of sin (7).
 - (2) Christ is revealer of the will of the Father (9-10).
 - d. Verses 13-14 is the work of the Spirit.
 - (1) He seals us in Christ.

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- (2) He is the proof of the fact that we are fellow heirs to all things with Christ.
 11. Eph. 2:18.
 12. Eph. 4:4-6.
 13. 2 Thess. 2.13-14.
 14. 1 Peter 2:2
- C. Therefore what we have seen over the last few weeks is how God revealed right from the start the mystery of His plurality and yet His oneness. Yet God continued to reveal more and more of Himself until now in the N.T. we have the fullest treatment of Triune nature of God.
1. This is critical to see and understand.
 2. We see people all the time invoke the name of God. We saw the imman, the Muslim Cleric speak of God. Many have said that to listen to his words without knowing who was saying them, one would have thought he was speaking like a Christian. The problem though is that when he said “God” it was not the God of the bible, for he would categorically deny the Trinity as blasphemy. He was speaking of a god who is not of the bible. And we know that there is no other God but the God of the bible.
- D. With all of this, let’s begin to now prove that each person of the Trinity is in fact God.

III. The Deity of Each Person in The Trinity.

- A. Father.
1. This is usually not an issue. Most people accept the deity of the Father. Seeing Him as God anytime “God” is mentioned in the bible. However, that is not always the case. At times it refers to Jesus or the Spirit, and other times it refers to the Godhead.
 - a. However, the understanding and richness that is attached to the Fatherhood of God is often lost upon us.
 - b. Within the Charismatic movement God has often been so lost in who and what He is that usually only the Spirit is seen and worshiped.

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- c. Within many other evangelical churches the desire to speak of Christ also causes the Father to go into the background and fade away.
- d. Within modern reformed churches the desire is so strong to emphasize that God is sovereign and all powerful that again the Fatherhood of God is lost.
 - (1) There is such a timidity in approaching God because what is foremost on the mind is His power and sovereignty.
 - (2) We are called to address Him as “Our Father.” We are to cry out to Him as “Abba, Father.”
 - (3) Even in many of the passages speaking of God’s sovereign will in salvation we see Him as Father. Jesus said in John 6,
 - (a) (37) All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.
 - (b) (40) For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.
 - (c) (44) No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.
 - (d) (65) For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.
 - (e) Is God sovereign? Yes. Do we force our will upon Him? No. But notice that all of those passages speaking of Him as sovereign also call Him Father.
 - (f) Therefore John also says in 1 John 3:1, “See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God.”

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2. We know God as Father because this is how Jesus knew Him and how He revealed Him.
 - a. Over 256 times God is called “Father” in the N.T.
 - b. Jesus Christ spoke of His equality with God because He called Him “Father.” (John 5:18)
 - c. We must always remember that the entire work and ministry of Jesus on earth was in relationship to God as Father and He as Son.
3. General passages.
 - a. When we see the O.T. the idea of Father is not as well defined as the N.T. But nonetheless the Fatherhood of God runs throughout.
 - (1) The choosing of Abraham out of idolatry is a key example.
 - (2) In Gen. 12 we see this and from that point onward the focus of the entire O.T. essentially is upon the nation raised by God through Abraham.
 - (3) In Hosea 11:1 it is written, “When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.”
 - (a) This speaks of two things, one is Jesus Christ and God’s unique care and love protecting Him from Herod in Matthew 2:15.
 - (b) But also is considering the historical fact of the Exodus. The bringing out of Israel was the act of a loving Father protecting, providing, caring, and loving His child.
 - (4) In Isaiah 1:2-4 it is written, “Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand. Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.”

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- (a) The prophet Isaiah speaks out against Israel. And when he speaks, he speaks for God.
 - (b) Here we see the pain of the Father toward rebellious children.
 - (c) Any father who has seen children rebel can understand to a small degree what God experienced with Israel's rebellion.
 - (d) You hear the real emotion and faithful love in Jeremiah 3:22, "Return, O faithless sons, I will heal your faithlessness. Behold, we come to Thee; For Thou art the LORD our God."
- b. Deut. 32:6.
 - c. Isaiah 63:16.
 - d. Isaiah 64:8.
 - e. Malachi 1:6.
4. Now, how does all of this work itself out within the bible? In other words, "Fine, God is called 'Father,' so what?"
- a. This title speaks to a key relational orientation toward all people.
 - b. Ephesians 3:14-15, "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name."
 - (1) Acts 17:24-26, "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,"
 - c. A Caring and Merciful Father.
 - (1) Psalm 68:5-6.

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- (2) Psalm 103:13.
- d. A Father to even His Rebellious Children.
 - (1) 2 Samuel 7:14-15.
 - (2) Jer. 3:22.
- e. We can approach Him as Father.
 - (1) Matthew 6:9, told by Christ to pray in this way. “Our Father, who is in heaven.”
- f. He gives to us as a Father.
 - (1) James 1.17.
- g. He is merciful and forgives.
 - (1) Luke 6:36.
 - (2) 1 John 2:1.
- h. He makes us His children.
 - (1) 1 John 3:1.
 - (2) Gal. 4:4-9 (speak the gospel)
- B. Son.
- C. Holy Spirit.

IV. Conclusion.

- A. This is a good place to end today. A lot of information. But all of it center upon the point that in the N.T. the revelation of God moved from simply plural in oneness to the specific number of three.
- B. If the Spirit and Christ can be shown to be God, then we have the Trinity. And that is what we will see next week.
- C. Let me end with one last passage out of Jude, 20-21. Let it be a benediction to each of you.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.