

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites—The Trinity, Pt 4

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Orthodoxy, Sound Doctrine, Trinity, Works of the Trinity, Economic Trinity

SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. Today is a final message on the Trinity.
 - 1. We saw the oneness and plurality of God in the Bible.
 - 2. We saw how the bible overtly speaks of both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as being God.
 - 3. Today I want to try to bring some serious application to the whole subject by teaching on the economic Trinity.
 - a. The economic Trinity refers to the acts of the triune God with respect to the creation, history, salvation, the formation of the Church, the daily lives of believers, etc. and describes how the Trinity operates within history in terms of the roles or functions performed by each Person of the Trinity—God's relationship with creation.
 - b. Here is another way of saying it: “When we speak of the economic Trinity, we are dealing with roles. We distinguish among the three persons of the Godhead in terms of what we call the economy of God. It is the Father who sends the Son into the world for our redemption. It is the Son who acquires our redemption for us. It is the Spirit who applies that redemption to us. We do not have three gods. We have one God in three persons, and the three persons are distinguished in terms of what They do”
(<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/whats-difference-between-ontological-and-economic-trinity/>)

II. How the Trinity Works in Creation.

- A. What does the Father do?
 - 1. He is, in a nutshell, the source of ideas and the fountainhead from which the eternal decrees came forth.

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- a. A decree is simply the sovereign decisions that the Father has made concerning all things external to himself. This involves all things, nothing is missed and nothing exists and occurs apart from his decrees.
 - (1) Isaiah 14:26-27, "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"
 - (2) Daniel 4:34-35, "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"
2. When trying to talk about the duties of the Father the primary way the bible presents it is how God the Father interacts with mankind.
 - a. Gives all good things.
 - (1) James 1:17, Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (good things are not always pleasant things.)
 - b. Election.
 - (1) Jude 1:1
 - (2) **1 Peter 1:1-2** (note how all three are shown in their unique duties here.)
 - (3) **Ephesians 1:4.**
 - c. Predestination to Adoption as sons.
 - (1) **Ephesians 1:5.**
 - (2) John 3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God"

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- d. Sending His Son.
 - (1) **John 3:16.**
 - (a) “so” = in thus/such a manner
 - (b) 1st “that” = result of loving.
 - (c) 2nd “that” = purpose of giving the Son.
 - (2) 1 John 4:7, 14.
- e. The crucifying and raising and exaltation of His Son.
 - (1) **Acts 2:23-24.**
 - (2) Ephesians 1:20
 - (3) Isaiah 53.
 - (a) The “he” is the Servant from 52:13-15 who is the promised, prophesied Messiah.
 - (b) Note how there was the placing of our sins upon Christ’s body.
- f. He is called the Savior.
 - (1) Jude 24-25.
- g. The giving of eternal life.
 - (1) 1 John 5:11, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”
- h. Giving to His Son those whom He will save.
 - (1) **John 6:37, 44, 45, 65.**
 - (2) John 10:24-29.
- i. Causes us to be born again.
 - (1) **1 Peter 1:3.**
 - (2) John 1:12-13.
- j. He gives glory and honor to His Son.
 - (1) **2 Peter 1:17.**
 - (2) Phil. 2:9-11.

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- k. He maintains our life.
 - (1) Jude 24-25.
 - (2) Philippians 1:6
 - (3) **Philippians 2:12-13**
- l. He comforts the afflicted.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 1:3 ff.
- B. The ministry of the Son.
 - 1. He did and does the will of the Father.
 - a. John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38.
 - b. This doctrine of subordination is **not** teaching that the Son is in some way inferior to the Father.
 - (1) Even in eternity past we see evidence that the Son was willingly in a subordinate position.
 - (2) This is seen in passages such as **Eph. 1:4** where it is the Father who chooses or elects those who will be in Christ. Christ does not. The same in John's gospel. The Father is the one who gave those whom Jesus was to save.
 - c. This idea of doing the will of the Father is seen as important to Jesus for obvious reasons. But it also connects to the lives of those who say they follow Christ.
 - (1) Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.
 - (2) Matthew 12:50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.
 - d. The subordination of the Son to the Father's will is also important to the assurance of our salvation.
 - (1) John 6:39 "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
 - (2) For those who wish to say that one who has been saved by Christ can be lost, they must be able to first give an answer

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to how Christ perfectly obeyed the will of the Father if He loses some who were given to Him.

2. All of this is important because you will see this subordination throughout the texts that we will consider today.
 3. With these points in mind let us consider now several of the works of Christ.
- C. Christ's works and duties.
1. The Creator of universe.
 - a. John 1:3.
 - b. **Colossians 1:16.**
 - (1) Verse 17 shows how He is also the Preserver of the universe.
 - (2) Think Romans 1:21, where though mankind was able to know God, they would not thank Him nor honor Him. Here is just one way that works out, not acknowledging His preserving work.
 - c. Hebrews 1:2-3.
 - (1) Note again the preserving aspect as well.
 2. Giver of life and judge.
 - a. **John 5:21-29.**
 - b. Note also here the subordination of Christ.
 3. Sin-Bearer.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:3.
 - b. Hebrews 9:28.
 - c. **1 Peter 2:24.**
 4. Redeemer.
 - a. The idea behind the word for "redeem" is out of the slave market.
 - b. 1 Peter 1:17-21.
 - (1) Note how the redeeming work of Christ is to produce in us a sense of genuine fear. To be casual about the work of

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Christ on the Cross is to mock the Father who sent Him as our redeemer.

- c. 1 Corinthians 1:26-30.
 - (1) Consider these words in verse 30.
 - (2) “wisdom from God.” Goes back to Paul’s point in vss. 23-24. For the believer, the One, Jesus Christ, who is foolish and a point of stumbling for the unbeliever, is God’s wisdom to us.
 - (3) Christ is our . . . (three things).
 - (4) On judgment day, what shall you point to for your hope of righteousness?
 - (a) Will it be your efforts to walk the Christian walk?
 - (b) NO! Let it be “Christ is my righteousness.”
 - (5) As you proceed through your life, walking in the steps of Christ, growing in respect to your salvation. What is the basis of your ability to be sanctified, to grow in holiness?
 - (a) Will it be your power? Your ability. Your efforts?
 - (b) NO! Let it be through the abiding presence of Jesus Christ. He is the one who broke the power of sin and death.
 - (c) He is the one who made you a slave to righteousness rather than sin.
 - (6) And when you give an account as to why you are different. Why your sin no longer is a factor in your life. When you say that you have been saved and redeemed from your sin. What will you point to?
 - (a) Will it be your sacrifices? Your prayers? Your trials and hardships?
 - (b) No! It is Christ who is your redeemer.
- d. Galatians 3:8-13.
- e. Titus 2:11-14.
- f. Hebrews 9:11-12.

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- (1) Shows the time frame of this work of redemption.
- g. Revelation 5:9.
 - (1) Here is shows the redemption in its essence. There was a purchase that occurred.
 - (2) The payment for our sin was paid.
5. Gathers God's people.
 - a. **John 10:15-16.**
 - (1) Note that as the good Shepherd He died in the place of His sheep.
 - (2) Even now through His Body He is calling and gathering His flock.
 - b. **Titus 2:14**, "who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and **to purify for Himself a people for His own** (the purpose of the redeeming work) possession, zealous for good deeds."
6. Example to God's people.
 - a. John 13:15.
 - b. 1 Timothy 1:16-17.
 - (1) Paul sees in his life the glorious truth of the vastness of God's mercy.
 - (2) In the work of Christ there is the promise of full forgiveness and full salvation. Even for the greatest of sinners.
 - (3) Notice Paul says "I am" not "I was." His own depravity was always before him. That is why he gloried in the Cross. For his salvation was not about him, it was about Christ and Christ's work.
 - (4) And it was to be as an example of the patience for those unbelievers who are afraid that God would not forgive them of "their" sins.
 - c. **1 Peter 2:18 ff.**
7. Advocate, Mediator, and Intercessor.

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- a. 1 John 2:1.
 - b. **Romans 8:33-34.**
 - c. Hebrews 7:24-25.
 - d. 1 Timothy 2:5
8. Building His Church.
- a. Matthew 16:18.
 - b. Because of this responsibility the bible also declares that he is the Head of the Body.
9. Judge of the world.
- a. John 5:22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,
 - b. Acts 17:31.
 - c. **2 Corinthians 5:6-11.**
 - d. 2 Timothy 4:1.
- D. The ministry of the Holy Spirit.
1. The giving of the Scripture.
 - a. We have already dealt with this in an earlier message.
 - b. 2 Peter 1:20-21, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:15-17, “from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
 - (1) (θεόπνευστος) literally means that it was God-breathed. The *pneuma* of God, the Spirit is how the Word came about.
 - (2) Therefore, without the Spirit there would be no bible.
 2. The Spirit's work in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

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- a. His birth.
 - (1) **Luke 1:27-35.**
 - (a) The Holy Spirit was the *agent* in bringing together the divine and human natures in Mary.
 - (b) Here again we have a sense of the Trinity, the Father sending His Son to become man, and the Spirit making that happen.
 - (2) Matthew 1:18-21.
- b. He empowered Jesus.
 - (1) Matthew 3:16.
 - (2) **Matthew 12:18-21**, “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel, nor cry out; Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A battered reed He will not break off, And a smoldering wick He will not put out, Until He leads justice to victory. And in His name the Gentiles will hope.”
 - (3) The Spirit coming upon Jesus at the baptism was also a sign for John the Baptist: "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' (**John 1:33**)
 - (4) But it also was part of the prophecy in the Old Testament.
 - (a) "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. (**Isaiah 42::1**)
 - (b) “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners.” (**Isaiah 61:1**)
 - (5) As a result Christ’s preaching was with authority.

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- (a) Luke 4:18, 22, 32, 36.
- (6) Christ had authority over the demons by the Spirit.
 - (a) Matthew 12:28, ““But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”
- c. He led Christ to be tempted.
 - (1) **Mark 1:12.**
- d. Christ offered Himself as a fit offering to the Father by the Spirit.
 - (1) **Hebrews 9:14.**
- e. He raised Christ Jesus.
 - (1) **Romans 8:11.**
- f. So we see him in the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Application

If Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, needed the power and presence of the Spirit, how much more do we!?

We also must see that though Christ was in the fullest manner possible walking in and by the power of the Spirit He still suffered; had problems, and was tempted. Therefore, it is foolish for us to think that we ought to be immune to these things ourselves.

Lastly, Christ’s work in the eyes and standards of the world was not a success. Therefore we ought not judge our value and purpose by the world. The Spirit will and must enable each of us to do God’s work. And we must judge our work according to that standard rather than the world’s.

- 3. The Spirit’s work among man.
 - a. He makes man, he is involved in creation.
 - (1) The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (**Genesis 1:2**)
 - (2) "The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (**Job 33:4**), **note the parallel structure.**

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- (3) Psalm 104:29-30.
- (4) Isaiah 40:10-18.
- b. He regenerates us.
 - (1) Explain regeneration.
 - (a) **John 3:1-10.**
 - (b) No human is able to bring themselves into the state of regeneration. The bible makes it clear that we are all born under the curse of sin. We are dead, and cannot make ourselves alive.
 - (c) That is the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of mankind.
- c. He teaches us.
 - (1) John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13.
- d. He is involved in the development and health of the Church.
 - (1) **Acts 13:2.**
 - (2) With this thought in mind, let me give you several aspects to how the Spirit develops the Church.
 - (a) He indwells it.
 - i) 1 Cor. 3:16-17.
 - ii) Ephesians 2:21-22, “in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”
 - (b) He presides over it.
 - i) By giving it leadership.
 - a) Acts 20:28.
 - ii) By giving it gifts.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-9, 11.
 - iii) By calling us to listen to His voice.
 - a) Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

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- b) Note that the context shows that the Spirit's words was the prophecy, which is now Scripture.
- (c) He empowers the preaching.
 - i) Acts 4:8-12.
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 2:4.
- (d) He empowers proper prayer.
 - i) **Ephesians 6:18.**
- (e) He empowers proper singing.
 - i) **Ephesians 5:18-19.**
- (f) He brings unity to the Church.
 - i) **Ephesians 4:3.**

III. Conclusion.

- A. Of all of the persons of the Trinity I think the Holy Spirit is the least understood today.
 - 1. We really did not even scratch the surface of the Spirit's work. Consider this brief listing of other things He does.
 - a. He seals us, guaranteeing us full redemption from sin. Empowers men to govern nations. Empowers them for military leadership. Through Him people perform mighty feats of strength.
 - b. The Spirit enables people to do artistic workmanship, including literary and musical works.
 - c. He gives us moral and spiritual courage.
 - 2. I believe he certainly the One we tend to take for granted.
 - 3. At the same time He is always directing our attention to the Son and the Father. You don't see the Holy Spirit lifting up the Himself, He is always working behind the scenes. Therefore it is possible to so over-emphasize His work that we fail to see what the work He does is for.
- B. To put it all together what you have is the Father working through the Son and The Spirit to accomplish all that He decrees. In everything we see or know about God it is always a work of the Trinity in perfect unity and fellowship.

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- C. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. (John 17:22-23)

Community Group Questions

- **As you read and heard of the various activities of the persons of the Trinity what stood out to you? What changed in your thinking about how God works?**