

We Believe: The Trinity

Community Group Questions

1. What do you say when people question you about the Trinity?
2. What benefits do you see in God being triune?
3. What do you learn about loving relationships when you observe the Trinity?
4. Looking at Ephesians 2 :3-14 can you name what each member of the Trinity does for our salvation?

Article of Faith #2 (con't) God reveals Himself in the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Today we will learn about the Trinity, one God, three persons. We will investigate some passages that teach about the trinity, some passages that teach that God is the Father, God is the Son and God is the Holy Spirit and finally find out what we can learn from the trinity.

The trinity is a doctrine that is frequently attacked and misunderstood. The most common line of attack is that the Bible itself never actually says the word "trinity"

The earliest known use of the word is by the church father Tertullian in about 200AD. About a century later, in 325, the First Council of Nicaea established the doctrine of the Trinity as orthodoxy and adopted the Nicene Creed.

Wayne Grudem defines the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: *"God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God"*

As Christians we need to look at the entirety of Scriptures in order to harmonize what the Bible teaches us about God.

There are verses that teach that there is **One God**.

Duet 6:4 *"Hear of Israel the Lord our God is One"* the shama, Israelite's said this 3 times a day,

Isaiah 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;

Romans 3:30 "God is one"

There are verses that teach the multi persons in the Godhead

Trinitarian verses

***Genesis 1:1-3 compare with John 1:1-3 & 14**

God speaking of Himself in the plural form.

Gen 1:26 *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"*

Gen 3:22 *"Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil"*

The Bible teaches us that the three persons of the Godhead are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Father is God: *Isaiah 64:8, "O LORD, you are our Father"*

Matthew 6:9 "Our Father in Heaven"

Jesus is God-*Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

The Holy Spirit is God –*Psalm 139:7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?*

1 Cor. 3:16 "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and His Spirit lives within you"

So knowing that God is three persons in One God...

What do we learn from the Trinity? We are constantly learning from God because He is infinite in wisdom but many times when we come

across something about Him that we do not fully understand we become frustrated or doubt the truth of it. Instead of doing that, what we need to do is ask “what can I learn from what is revealed”?

We learn about Love- Last week I left off with the character trait of love. 1st John tells that God is love, the Trinity helps us to understand that God in Himself encompasses love. The trinity in essence is love, if God were not triune before He created there would be no love, because there would be no one to love. Love was expressed in Himself, between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In John 17:24 when Jesus was praying to the Father, He said the Father loved Him “*before the foundation of the world*” this communicates that love was happening.

What does this love look like? Mutual glorification...listen to these two verses

John 16:13-14 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

John 17:4-5 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

The trinity displays love because each member is seeking to glorify the other members. What does that mean?

Tim Keller says it this way...*”To glorify someone is also to serve or defer to him or her. Instead of sacrificing their interests to make yourself happy, you sacrifice your interests to make them happy. Why? Your ultimate joy is to see them in joy.*

So this is the example of love...to put the interests and needs of others before our own needs, which leads to the next thing the Trinity teaches us about...

We learn about Relationships- One of the most difficult things about relationships is putting other people before ourselves and there are two places in the Scriptures that tells us that we have an opportunity to practice because we are unified with other people.

The first unifying relationship is marriage *Gen 2:24 and they shall become one flesh.* A mystery of marriage is a man and women becoming one. In marriage we have daily opportunities to put another individual that we are physically, emotionally and spiritually connected with before ourselves. Do we do that? Not all the time.

Our society does not give us much support either.

I believe there is a constant attack on marriage from the big issues such as defining marriage and broken marriages, to the small issues such negative sentiments about marriage. One person spoke about marriage like this... *The secret of a happy marriage, remains a secret.*

People feel like we can't figure this out but we learn from the truth of the Scriptures that when we put the needs of our spouse before our own we are putting them before ourselves and that is what God demonstrates in the Trinity relationship.

The second unifying relationship is the Church

1 Cor 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Unfortunately our society does not look at the church in a positive light. Someone once said *“He who is near the church is often far from God”*

Two reasons people feel that way are... 1. They do not see Christians working together for the common good of the Gospel

William Temple said “The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who NOT its members”

We believe we have a mission in our community to look outside our walls and welcome people in. If we forget that we will slowly die as a church. We will die because of the ageing process but we will die because we will kill each other for lack of mission.

2. The second reason is they do not see a difference in the way we handle relationships. There are two sides to this...the first is the person that sins against another person. When people see us sinning against one another they think to themselves, “why would I want to be a part of a group of people that treat one another like that”

The second is how we respond to being sinned against. I will say this...you will be sinned against as a part of the church. How you handle being sinned against will either communicate to the world around you the Love of Jesus or your own selfishness.

Do you criticize and complain? Do you gossip and tell others? Do you pay back evil with evil? Are you not willing to take steps to work the problem out? Do you distance yourself or run and hide?

You see sin is Us trying to make other people revolve around us, the core of sin is selfishness. The person who sins against another person is selfishly saying “I do what I want regardless of the effects it has on

others” And the person who is sinned against can become selfish and say “I am going to make that person pay for what they did to me”

It becomes a self-centered life. The Trinity illustrates a life centered around others.

When Jesus came He was bringing us back to the position we needed to be in, a life centered around God and others because He dealt with our sin.

Which leads to the final thing we learn from the trinity...

We learn about Salvation

***Ephesians 1:2-14** is the praise of the Trinity. The three members are working together to accomplish Salvation.

The work of the Trinity in our salvation.

The Father – Orchestrates –Here are some words in this passage that describes the Father’s work...

“Blessed us in Christ” “chose us before the foundation of the world”

“Predestined us” “Adopted us” “according to the purpose of His will”

The Son- Sacrifices –Here are some words to describe Jesus’ work in our salvation...

“redemption through His blood” “forgiveness of our sins” “according to the riches of His grace” “we have an inheritance” “in Him we heard the Word of truth, the gospel of our salvation and believed in Him

The Holy Spirit-Seals Us - Here are some words that describes the Holy Spirits work in our salvation...

“sealed with promised Holy Spirit” “guarantee of our inheritance”

We see the Trinity working together to bring us into a right relationship with the One God that reveals Himself in three persons.

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