

“The Holy Trinity”  
(1 John 1:1-4)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning, we saw John introduce Jesus to us

As the eternal Word –

The One who was present with God from the very beginning;

The One who created absolutely everything that has been created;

The One who is God Himself;

And yet not the only One who is –

He is God, and yet He was with God.

B. Preview.

John was actually introducing us

Not only to the deity of Jesus Christ,

But also to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Sometimes doctrine gets a bad rap –

Many Christians don’t want to learn “doctrine.”

They just want to “love” God and others.

They want to focus on relationship,

And not on theology –

With all the time the church has spent in the past on doctrine –

Often to the exclusion of relationship –

It’s not surprising to see this pendulum swing.

Focusing on knowledge only –

Without applying that knowledge to life –

Ends in what we call dead orthodoxy –

You can have right belief, but a dead heart.

We need to see that both are important.

Our beliefs are to dictate how we live.

If we don't live according to our beliefs,

Then, more often than not, our beliefs change to match our lives.

That is something we all need to be on our guard against in every area,

Especially in the two we're looking at today:

The deity of Jesus Christ,

And the Trinity.

What I'd like to do this evening

Is briefly consider what the Bible teaches regarding the Trinity

1. That you might believe it,
2. And that you might live according to it by giving God the glory that is His.

## II. Sermon.

### A. So first, what is the Biblical teaching on the Trinity?

Simply put,

There is one God who is three Persons.

1. This is actually revealed in our passage this evening.

John wrote to testify of the Word of Life –

The One who is the eternal life,

Who was with the Father,

That is the Son of God –

So that his readers might have fellowship with him –

His fellowship being with the Father

And with His Son Jesus Christ.

The Father and Son are both mentioned,

But where is the Spirit?

He is the bond of the fellowship John speaks of,

As we often hear in God's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

He is the One who enables us to have this fellowship –

As we read this morning, "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" (Phil. 2:1-2). –

By uniting us into body in Christ –

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

The Lord reveals tells you in His Word that there is only one God.

He says in Isaiah 44:8, "Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced *it* to you and declared *it*? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any *other* Rock? I know of none."

Israel's great confession was, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" (Deu. 6:4).

But He also tells you there are three persons who are called God –

The Father: "For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him" (1 Cor. 8:5-6).

The Son: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

And the Holy Spirit: "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God'" (Acts 5:4-5). –

Which is why we see their names paralleled in ways that show their equality –

As in the benediction I read a moment ago, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14);

And in the baptismal formula Jesus gave to His church, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20).

If we had the time,

And needed further proof,

We could also look at how each of them bears the names of God

And does the works of God.

## 2. And so that you’re not tempted –

As the Apostolic and United Pentecostal “Churches” are –

To resolve this “mystery” –

Their being one God and three persons –

By thinking these are just three names for one Person: Jesus –

God shows us in His Word that they are also distinguished from one another:

Jesus was with the Father in the beginning –

“He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:2) –

He is not the Father.

The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father:

“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand” (John 3:35).

“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love” (John 15:9).

“But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me” (John 14:31).

The Father and the Son both send the Spirit:

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:26).

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you” (John 16:7).

And all three were present at Jesus’ baptism, “Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased’” (Matt. 3:16-17).

There is only one God –

One infinite, eternal and unchangeable Being –

There are three persons who are called God –

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Who have existed from all eternity and are equal in every way –

And these three persons are not the same person.

This is the doctrine of the Trinity.

B. Why is it important that you believe this?

1. In the same way John said it’s important

That believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God –

That you believe in His deity –

If you are to be saved;

It’s also important that you believe in the Trinity.

Why? Because this is who God is.

This is how He has revealed Himself.

This is how He is distinguished from all the so-called gods of this world.

Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

Eternal life is to know the true God –

That is, the Father, since that’s the One to whom Jesus is praying (v. 1) –

And Jesus Christ –

Who is also the Son of God in your nature.

How can you know the true God,

Without knowing who He is?

How can you come into a saving relationship with God

Unless you believe in Jesus Christ?

Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).

Without Him, you can’t! He’s the only way.

And yet, how can you believe in Him

If you don’t know who He is?

You’re not saved by a name,

But by the person designated by that name.

Jesus the taxi driver can’t save you,

Neither can Jesus the mason,

Or Jesus the tax preparer,

Or Jesus the business executive,

Or Jesus the government official.

Only Jesus of Nazareth,

The Son of Abraham, the Son of David,

The Son of God can save you.

But which God is He the Son of?

The Son of the Triune God.

The son of the god of Islam can't save you,

Neither can the son of the god of the Jehovah's Witnesses,

Nor that of the Apostolic and United Pentecostals,

Nor that of the Mormons.

Only the Son of the Triune God of the Bible can.

You can't have the right Son of God,

Unless you have the right God,

And that God is Triune.

This is how He has distinguished Himself.

In the Athanasian Creed –

Which is a very early confession of the church,

We read, "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance" (Arts. 1-4).

Your salvation depends on this doctrine,

Which is one very important reason to believe in the Trinity.

## 2. But there is another reason

Why it's important for you to believe this,

And that's because you owe your salvation

To each member of the Godhead,

Because each is intimately involved in your salvation:

a. The Father chose you.

b. The Son paid the price.

c. And the Spirit is what He purchased.

If you don't see this, you won't give each the glory that you owe them.

First, the Father chose you.

Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Paul says the Father is the One who singled you out,

Who chose you to eternal life –

Not because of anything good in you,

But purely according to the kind intention of His will.

You owe your salvation to God, the Father.

Second, Jesus paid the price for your redemption.

Peter writes, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*" (1 Pet. 1:17-19).

Jesus laid down His life to save you.

You owe your salvation to God, the Son.

But the Spirit is what Jesus purchased for you.

Paul writes, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

The Spirit applies what the Son did by uniting you to Jesus,

And taking up residence in your soul,



To transform you from the inside into the image of Jesus.

What Adam lost for you through the Fall –

What we call original righteousness,

A disposition/desire towards holiness –

The Son regained for you through His work:

That is, the Spirit's living and acting in your soul.

Paul writes, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

And so now you again share in God's holy nature through the Spirit.

Peter writes, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet. 1:2-4).

The Spirit is the One who changes you and enables you to trust Jesus.

You owe your salvation to God, the Spirit.

The doctrine of the Trinity

Not only shows you which God sent His Son to save you,

It also shows you how indebted you are to God –

And to God alone,

Not God and any creature –

For your eternal salvation.

It is from first to last His work.

That's why it's important that you believe the doctrine of the Trinity.

Is that what you believe?

Do you believe that Jesus is God the Son?

Do you believe He is the Son of the Triune God –

Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

If you do,

If you are looking to Him alone to save you,

If you are turning from all your sins,

And trying your best to live in all His ways from your heart,

Then you are saved,

Purely by the grace of God the Father, Son and Spirit alone.

Remember to give each the glory that is Theirs. Amen.

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