

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
THE TRIUNE GOD
PART 3

This morning we will finish up looking at the topic of our Triune God or the Holy Trinity in our series on Foundation of Faith. And we have seen how the Old Testament speaks of the Holy Trinity. Yes, it may not be as clear as we like, but by the time we get to the New Testament the teaching is very clear and what may have been veiled some in the Old Testament Scriptures, is now opened up to us in the New Testament. In fact, it opens up what was spoken of in the Old Testament for us!

Regarding this teaching of the Triune God, that is one God manifest in three distinct persons, we are told,

The many indications in both the Old and New Testaments that God exists or subsists as a triune being have made the doctrine of the Trinity a central fact of all orthodox creeds from the early church until modern times. Any departure from this is considered a departure from scriptural truth. Although the word “trinity” does not occur in the Bible, the facts of scriptural revelation permit no other explanation.

While the doctrine of the Trinity is a central fact of Christian faith, it is also beyond human comprehension and has no parallel in human experience. It is best defined as holding that, while God is one, He exists as three persons. These persons are equal, have the same attributes, and are equally worthy of adoration, worship, and faith. Yet the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead makes clear that they are not three separate gods, like three separate human beings such as Peter, James, and John. Accordingly, the true Christian faith is not tritheism, a belief in three God's. On the other hand, the Trinity is essential to the being of God and is more than a form of divine revelation.

The persons of the Trinity, while having equal attributes, differ in certain properties. Hence, the First Person of the Trinity is called the Father. The Second Person is called the Son and is sent forth by the Father. The Third Person is the Holy Spirit who is sent forth by the Father and the Son. This is called in theology the doctrine of procession, and the order is never reversed, that is, the Son never sends the Father and the Spirit never sends the Son. In the nature of the uniqueness of the Godhead, there is no illustration or parallel in human experience. Thus this doctrine should be accepted by faith on the basis of scriptural revelation even if it is beyond human comprehension and definition.

- Lewis Sperry Chafer, Revised by John F. Walvoord, Major Bible Themes, pp. 40-41

Now here is a problem for many and it is a big problem. When they think of God the Father they see Him as Almighty God. I think most would agree with that, not a big deal. The problem comes with Jesus and they see His role as lesser and thus, He must be inferior to God the Father.

In John 14:28 Jesus said, **“For My Father is greater than I.”** When you read that it seems to be saying that God the Father is greater than Jesus, but that is not the case. You have to take the Scriptures in totality and not just part of a verse. You see, He is not speaking in essence or being because over and over again John shows us that Jesus is God, equal to the Father. So then what does He mean? He is saying that when He became flesh He emptied Himself of some of His Godly attributes and freely submitted Himself to the Father. That is what Paul said in Philippians 2:5-11, **“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

You see, it didn't make Him a lesser God, but He freely submitted Himself to the Father. They are all equal, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but they all have roles to play in the Godhead.

Think of a husband and wife. The Scriptures teach us that we are equal. Paul, in Galatians 3:27-28 tells us, **“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”** So we are all one in Christ, one is not superior to the other and that goes in a marriage relationship.

Now, in saying that, isn't there different roles in a marriage relationship? Of course there is. In fact, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 11:3, **“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“But I want you to know and realize that Christ is the Head of every man, the head of a woman is her husband, and the Head of Christ is God.”**

That is what we see in the Godhead, in the Holy Trinity. One God manifested in three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, equal in all and yet each has His role or function in the Godhead! In fact, if Jesus were not God in essence, it would be absurd for Him to compare Himself to God in position. In what sense is it any kind of revelation for a mere man, or even an angel, to say, “God is greater than I”? So don't let those distracters move you away from our Triune God, for as I have said, if you deny the Holy Trinity then you are worshiping a God that is formed from the imagination of your own heart and not the God of the Bible.

This morning, as we continue to look at our Triune God, we are going to be looking at how the Godhead is actively involved in our lives. And as you look at these things this morning, as you see how intimate they are with each other, that they are One, you can understand the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane before Jesus went to the cross of Calvary because He knew that there was going to be that separation from God the Father as the sins of the world were placed upon Him. This is something that the Father and the Son never experienced in eternity past and never will experience again. That is how much God loves us, that He was willing to endure that for us!

Before we get to our Scripture verses this morning, let me share this illustration with you regarding the Trinity. And granted, there is nothing that can fully illustrate this for us, but this one does a good job. It may be simplistic, but it does drive the point home. We are told,

Miss Thompson had a tough task. Her Sunday school lesson plan called for teaching her primary class about the Trinity. It was difficult enough to hold their attention with stories and creative object lessons, but when it came to keeping them interested in the identity, attributes, and purpose of the Father, Son, and Spirit . . . well, that was next to impossible.

While thinking through her lesson, she had a creative thought: She would use a big, thick pretzel, with its three holes in the middle.

When Sunday morning came she stood before her class, holding the pretzel high in the air, explaining how it was made up of one strand of dough but was so intricately interwoven that there were three distinct holes, each one having its own special shape. She pointed first to the hole at the top, “Children, this is like God the Father. Think of this first hole as your heavenly Father.”

She then pointed to the second, explaining slowly and carefully, “This is like God the Son. Think of the hole here on the right as Jesus, your Savior.” The class of fresh little faces seemed to be following her with keen interest, so she continued, “And this third hole is God the Holy Ghost. Just as this is one pretzel made up of three separate holes, so the Trinity is one unit made up of three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

- FunnySermons.com

It may be a simple illustration to illustrate an infinite concept, but it does drive the point home. And even though we may not grasp it completely with our finite minds, we can believe it by faith and that is exactly what God wants us to do! Now we are going to begin by looking at the Trinity at work in our lives and you will see how closely they work together, that they are One and yet three distinct persons.

1. WHO INDWELLS THE TRUE BELIEVER?

Now this is an interesting concept, who indwells a believer because for the most part many of you would say the Holy Spirit and some of you would say Jesus and you would be right, but not completely. You see, the Triune God indwells the believer. How do I know that? Because that is what the Scriptures teach us. Let me show you.

GOD THE FATHER

In II Corinthians 6:16-18 we are told, “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.” And in Philippians 2:13 we are told, “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” In other words, God the father indwells the true believer. It might not be something that you were thinking about, but it is what the Scriptures are teaching us.

GOD THE SON

In II Corinthians 13:5 we are told, “**Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified.**” And in Galatians 2:20 we are told, “**I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**” And lastly, in Colossians 1:27 we are told, “**To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” Thus, not only is God the Father in a believer, but also God the Son, Jesus indwells believers!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

In I Corinthians 6:19 we are told, “**Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?**” Then there is what Jesus tells us in John 14:17, “**the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**” And Paul makes this point in II Timothy 1:14, “**That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.**” And lastly, Paul tells us in Romans 8:9, “**But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**” You see, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit indwells true believers lives; they are all involved in our lives intimately!

2. WHO SEARCHES OUR HEARTS?

Again, we might not think of these things, but the Scriptures clearly show us that it is God, the Triune God who searches our hearts. Let me show you what I mean.

GOD THE FATHER

We are told in I Chronicles 28:9, **“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”**

And in Jeremiah 17:10 we are told, **“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways. According to the fruit of his doings.”**

I think that is pretty straight forward, God the Father searches our hearts; He knows what is in us!

GOD THE SON

Then in Revelation 2:23 we see Jesus speaking to the church in Thyatira and he said, **“... and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”** So not only does God the Father search our heart’s but so does God the Son!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

In I Corinthians 2:10 Paul also tells us of the Holy Spirit as he wrote, “**But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.**” And in Romans 8:26-27 he wrote, “**Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**” So once again we see the Triune God who searches our hearts!

3. WHOM DO CHRISTIANS FELLOWSHIP WITH?

Now this may be an easy one because we know that Jesus came to restore that broken fellowship with God the Father so we fellowship with Him, right? Yes, but there is more as you will see.

GOD THE FATHER

In I John 1:3 we are told, **“that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”** This verse speaks of fellowship with both the Father and the Son but for our purposes, we are focusing right now on the fellowship with the Father. Then, in John 14:23 we are told, **“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’”** Again we see both God the Father and God the Son here and when it speaks of them making their home in us, it is speaking of fellowship!

GOD THE SON

In I Corinthians 1:9 we are told, **“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”** And again, remember what we read in I John 1:3, **“that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”** So our fellowship is not only with God the Father, but also with God the Son!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 13:14, “**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.**” And in Philippians 2:1 we are told, “**Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy.**” When Paul speaks of communion he is speaking of fellowship. And thus, we have seen that Christians have fellowship with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit!

4. WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD?

This next one, who raised Jesus from the dead doesn't apply specifically to us but you will see how we can apply this as we look at, in a few minutes, who raised us from the dead. Now in regards to who raised Jesus from the dead, most would say God the Father and you would be right, but not completely. Let me show you.

GOD THE FATHER

In Acts chapter 3 we are told, “**and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. . . . To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.**” Acts 3:15, 26. In I Thessalonians 1:9-10 Paul tells us, “**For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**” In Acts 2:32 we are told, “**This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.**” And in Acts 17:30-31 we are told, “**Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.**” Again, that is pretty straight forward, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, I don’t think anyone would argue that point, but there is more as we will see.

GOD THE SON

In John 2:19-22 notice what we are told, **“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”** And in John 10:17 we are told, **“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.”** So we see that Jesus raised Himself up and the Father raised Jesus up, but we are not done, as you well know!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Paul tells us in Romans 8:11, **“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”** And Peter tells us in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”** So we see that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were all actively involved in the resurrection of Jesus, but what about our resurrection, who is involved in that? We are going to look at that next.

5. WHO WILL RAISE THE TRUE BELIEVER FROM THE DEAD?

I realize that you have already guessed that it is our Triune God who will raise us from the dead, but we need to look at the Scriptures to show us that is what they are teaching and not just go by the words of man.

GOD THE FATHER

In I Corinthians 6:14 we are told, “And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.” So we see that God the Father will raise us up, but again, there is more.

GOD THE SON

Notice what Jesus tells us in John 5:25-29, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

In John chapter 6 Jesus said, “**And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.**” John 6:40, 44. And in Philippians 3:20-21 Paul tells us, “**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**” You see, not only will God the Father raise us up, but so will God the Son and there is more!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Paul tells us in Romans 8:11, “**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**” So very clearly you can see that the Godhead is actively involved in our resurrection, the resurrection of these bodies of flesh!

6. WHO SANCTIFIES THE TRUE BELIEVER?

Keep in mind the moment we are saved, as soon as we ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives, to cleanse us from all our sins, the sanctification process begins and it is not just the Holy Spirit that is doing the work in us as you will see.

GOD THE FATHER

In I Thessalonians 5:23 we are told, **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** So we see God the Father sanctifying our lives, making us more like Him, but there is more!

GOD THE SON

Paul tells us in Hebrews 2:11 as he is speaking of Jesus, **“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”** So not only is God the Father doing the sanctifying in our lives, but so is God the Son, and there is more!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

And Peter tells us in I Peter 1:2, **“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”** Once again there is no mistaking; the Godhead is actively involved in the sanctification process in our lives!

7. WHO GIVES THE CHRISTIAN THE WORDS TO SPEAK?

Once again, as we will see, it is the Godhead that works in our lives and gives to us the words that we speak and the problem many times, for us, is that we don't surrender to God but we speak out of our own hearts, which is never good! Thus, let's look at some verses to see how the Godhead, the Triune God works in our lives giving us the words to speak!

GOD THE FATHER

In Matthew 10:17-20 we are told these words by Jesus, **“But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”** So we see here that God the Father has given to the apostles the words to speak in difficult situations and I believe He does the same today. Many of the most memorable and powerful testimonies of the great martyrs were uttered just before they were put to death. God gave them a special presence of mind and clarity of thought to present a testimony more powerful than they would otherwise have been able to give. And I believe if we are listening He gives to us the exact words we need in any given situation! Now some feel that this is speaking of the Holy Spirit, and I do believe that God the Father is speaking through the Holy Spirit, but here are a few other verses to show you that the Father speaks to us. (See also John 8:28, John 12:50, Psalm 49:3, Ephesians 1:17-21, Proverbs 30:5-6, Hebrews 12:25).

GOD THE SON

In Luke 21:12-15 we see Jesus tell us, **“But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.”** So not only does God the Father give us the words to say, but so does Jesus!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

And in Luke 12:11-12 we are told again by Jesus, **“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”** It doesn’t matter what situation you are in, how difficult it may be, we see our Triune God, the Godhead working together to give to us the words we need to say!

8. WHO IS THE CREATOR GOD?

When we think of creation, many think of God the Father doing the work, but as you will see, and yes, you have guessed it, the Godhead was actively involved with creation!

GOD THE FATHER

We are told in Isaiah 44:24, “**Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: ‘I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.’**” Who made all things? God the Father! Also, in Isaiah 64:8 we are told, “**But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.**” He not only created all things, He even created us!

GOD THE SON

In Colossians 1:15-17 Paul tells us of Jesus being the creator of all things and that He is the one that holds them all together. He wrote, “**He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**”

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, “**[Now] He is the exact likeness of the unseen God [the visible representation of the invisible]; He is the Firstborn of all creation. For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). [Prov 8:22-31.]**” I think that is pretty clear, Jesus, along with God the Father was actively involved in creation and He is still holding all things together for without Him doing that, everything would come apart!

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

And lastly, in Job 33:4 we are told, “**The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.**” And in Job 26:13 we are told, “**By His Spirit He adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.**” In Psalm 104:30 we are told, “**You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.**” Do you see how the Godhead was actively involved in creation!

I hope you have seen over the past few weeks that we serve a Triune God, or that God is a trinity of persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. And please understand that the Father is not the same person as the Son; the Son is not the same person as the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the same person as the Father. They are separate persons and yet, they are all one God. They are co-eternal, they are co-equal, they are co-powerful and they are in absolute perfect harmony with each other.

Think of a mime, he mimics what another person is doing and sometimes they are pretty good at it and other times they are not so good at it. That is not our God. They are in perfect harmony with each other and no one acts on His own, they work together and it is something that we have never experienced in this life unless we look at our Triune God and just because we don't see it in our own lives, in what we do, that does not negate the fact that our Triune God has that kind of unity!

It is like this, and please listen carefully,

Within his own mysterious being God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The designations are just ways in which God is God. Within the Godhead there are three "persons" who are neither three Gods nor three parts of God, but coequally and coeternally God.

- Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 143

Again, we might not understand it and we won't understand it fully with our finite minds. And yes, the word "trinity" is not found anywhere in the New Testament or the Old Testament but the concept, the teachings are found throughout the Word of God, from Genesis through the book of Revelation! May we not forget that truth! I believe it is an important truth for our Christian faith and to deny it means, as I have said, that you are not worshipping the God of the Bible, but a God you have made up in the imagination of your own mind, your own heart and that is very dangerous!

As I begin to rap things up this morning regarding our Triune God, listen to these words from John MacArthur. He wrote,

The Trinity is an unfathomable, and yet unmistakable doctrine in Scripture. As Jonathan Edwards noted, after studying the topic extensively, “I think [the doctrine of the Trinity] to be the highest and deepest of all Divine mysteries” (An Unpublished Treatise on the Trinity).

Yet, though the fullness of the Trinity is far beyond human comprehension, it is unquestionably how God has revealed Himself in Scripture—as one God eternally existing in three Persons.

The Bible is clear. There is only one God, yet He exists, and always has existed, as a Trinity of Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (cf. John 1:1, 2). To deny or misunderstand the Trinity is to deny or misunderstand the very nature of God Himself.

- John MacArthur, Our Triune God

I realize that this has been a lot of information this morning, and we covered a lot of Scriptures. If you missed any or you could not keep up, they will be on our web page for you to review. My prayer is that you would fall in love with our Triune God; that God manifests Himself in three distinct persons and yet there is only one God; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. May we believe it by faith!