

Living in Life Union with Holy Spirit
Session 8: Perichoresis – Relational Love

What is Perichoresis?

In theology, perichoresis describes the relationship among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Trinity. It's the idea that each person of the Godhead fully indwells and permeates the others, sharing one divine essence while remaining distinct in their Persons.

Think of it as a divine dance or an eternal embrace—three persons so united that they “occupy the same space,” yet never lose their individual identities. Perichoresis captures this mystery: the three persons “dwell in each other” so completely that every act of God involves all three, yet each retains a unique relational identity.

Definition and Meaning

Perichoresis (*perichōrēsis*) - literally means

1. _____
 - **Mutual** is defined directed by each toward the other or the others
 - **Indwelling** is defined as being an inner _____ or _____ force
2. _____
 - **Inter** is defined as between; among; in the midst; reciprocal; located between; occurring between; shared by, involving, or derived from two or more; between the limits of; existing between
 - **Penetrate** is defined as to pass into or through; to into or through; to diffuse through or into
 - **Interpenetrate** is defined as to penetrate between, within, or throughout; to _____
3. _____
 - **Circulation** is defined as moving in a circle, circuit, or orbit; to pass from person to person or place to place as to flow without obstruction.

Perichoresis describes the Trinity's _____:
each person (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) fully contains and is contained by the others, without
_____ their _____.

It's derived from:

- **Peri:** Around, about (as in "perimeter").
- **Choreo:** To _____ for, to contain, or to go (related to choreography, movement in space).

- Together, it suggests a dynamic, _____ “going around” or “making space” within God’s being.
- To be “dynamic” means it has _____ and productive _____. All life is energy.

Key Characteristics

- **Unity:** The Trinity shares one divine essence - _____, _____, _____, _____.
- **Distinction:** The persons remain Father, Son, and Spirit—not _____ or _____.
- **Dynamic:** Perichoresis implies _____-love, action, and relationship flow eternally.

Biblical Foundations

Perichoresis isn’t a biblical word but is inferred from Scriptures that reveal the Trinity’s mutual indwelling and relational unity.

John 14:8-11 TPT

1. _____

- Jesus describes a profound unity—He fully reveals the Father because the Father dwells in Him, and He in the Father. This mutual “in-ness” is perichoretic.

John 14:16-17 TPT

- **Connection:** Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit extends this later suggesting all three persons interpenetrate.

2. _____

John 16:13-15 TPT

- The Spirit doesn’t act independently but shares the Father’s and Son’s truth and glory. The Trinity’s possessions and actions are one, reflecting perichoresis.
- **Connection:** The Spirit’s role shows dynamic circulation—what belongs to one belongs to all.

3. _____

- Jesus prays for believers’ unity to mirror the Trinity’s—a perichoretic oneness where love and glory flow between persons.
- **Connection:** Our participation in God’s life reflects the Trinity’s mutual indwelling.

4. _____

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 TPT

- The Spirit knows the Father fully, suggesting He dwells within God’s being, a perichoretic intimacy.

Theological Importance

Perichoresis isn't just abstract—it shapes core Christian beliefs:

1. _____

1 John 4:7-10 TPT

Those who are loved by God, let His love continually pour from you to one another, because God is love. Everyone who loves is fathered by God and experiences an intimate knowledge of Him. 8 The one who doesn't love has yet to know God, for God is love. 9 The light of God's love shined within us when He sent His matchless Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 This is love: He loved us long before we loved Him. It was His love, not ours. He proved it by sending His Son to be the pleasing sacrificial offering to take away our sins

- Perichoresis reveals God as a community of _____. The Father, Son, and Spirit exist in eternal relationship, giving and receiving without hierarchy or rivalry.
- God's essence is love, and He has invited us into relationship.

Quote from “The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons:”

It also means that God is not some immutable, impassible deity locked up in His self-isolation who cannot be touched with our human feelings, pains and hurts, but on the contrary is the kind of God who freely acts and passionately interacts with us in this world, for in His own eternal Being He is the ever living, loving and acting God who will not be without us but who in His grace freely determines Himself for us as our God and Savior.

In His love of us and for us God freely wills not to be without us and wills to be with us as those whom He has eternally chosen to coexist with Himself and share His eternal love. It is the sheer gratuitous grace of God, the transcendent freedom of His self-determination in love for us, which is so wonderful, for He does not need relation to us to be what He is as the living acting God. In His superabounding and overflowing love, He does not want to be alone without us or want us to be alone without Him.

It is of course because God actively loves us and actually loves us so much that He has given us His only Son to be the Savior of the world, that He reveals Himself to us as the Loving One, and as He whose Love belongs to His innermost Being as God.

It is in the Cross of Christ that the utterly astonishing nature of the Love that God is has been fully disclosed, for in refusing to spare His own Son whom He delivered up for us all, God has revealed that He loves us more than He loves Himself. And so, it is in the Cross of Jesus Christ above all that God has both exhibited the very Nature of His Being as Love and has irrevocably committed his Being to relationship with us in unconditional Love. In Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit we know no other God and believe that there is no other God for us than this God, who freely seeks and creates fellowship with us, utterly undeserving sinners though we are.

The fact that, as St John tells us, God is Love, who has manifested His love to us in sending His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him, does not mean that God is Love in virtue of His love for us, but that God is in Himself the fullness and perfection of Love in loving and being loved which out of sheer love overflows freely toward others. It means that the Love that God is, is not that of solitary inactive or static love, whatever that may be, but the active movement of reciprocal loving within the eternal Being of God which is the one ultimate Source of all love.

Since God is Love, in that He loves within Himself and in that He loves us in Christ, He can no more cease loving, or cease to love us, than He can cease to be God or go back upon the incarnation and death of His only Son.

2. _____

John 17:23 TPT

You live fully in Me and now I live fully in them so that they will experience perfect unity, and the world will be convinced that You have sent Me, for they will see that You love each one of them with the same passionate love that You have for Me.

- Jesus makes it clear that perichoresis now extends to believers

2 Peter 1:3-4 TPT

Everything we could ever need for life and complete devotion to God has already been deposited in us by His divine power. For all this was lavished upon us through the rich experience of knowing Him who has called us by name and invited us to come to Him through a glorious manifestation of His goodness. 4 As a result of this, He has given you magnificent promises that are beyond all price, so that through the power of these tremendous promises you can experience partnership with the divine nature, by which you have escaped the corrupt desires that are of the world

- **Divine** – G2304 – *theios* - (an adjective, derived from 2316 */theós*, "God") – divine, manifesting the characteristics of God's nature

The term "*theios*" is used in the New Testament to describe something that pertains to or is characteristic of God. It conveys the idea of divinity or godliness, often highlighting the divine nature or attributes. In the context of the New Testament, it underscores the divine power and nature that believers are called to partake in through their relationship with God.

- **Nature** – G5449 *phýsis* – properly, _____ nature, the underlying constitution or make-up of someone (something). In the New Testament it is used to denote the inherent nature or essence of something, often referring to the natural order or characteristics inherent in creation.

- **Partnership/Partaker** – G2844 - *koinōnós* - properly, a participant who mutually _____ and shares _____; a "joint-participant."

The term "*koinónos*" refers to someone who shares in or participates in something with others. It implies a partnership or fellowship, often in a spiritual or communal context. In the New Testament, it is used to describe those who share in the sufferings of Christ, the spreading of the Gospel, or the blessings of the Christian community.

- **Passion Footnote:** The Greek word *koinonos* means "to participate as a partner, to partake of, to be a companion with, to have fellowship with" the divine nature. This is one of the great mysteries of our faith, that God shares his nature with us. We are given birth by the Holy Spirit to be God's true sons and daughters, and every father imparts his DNA and his "nature" to his children. The Greek word *physis* (nature) is taken from the word *phyō*, which means "to give birth, produce, bring forth, or to grow up." Christ lives in us and transforms us into his very own likeness. In Christ we share with him the divine nature. We will all bear the image of the Man from heaven, Jesus Christ.
- Theosis (divinization): We don't become God but share in His life, reflecting perichoretic unity.

Practical Implications

Perichoresis transforms Christian living:

1. _____

Ephesians 4:3-6 TPT

Be faithful to guard the sweet harmony of the Holy Spirit among you in the bonds of peace, 4 being one body and one spirit, as you were all called into the same glorious hope of divine destiny. 5 For the Lord God is one, and so are we, for we share in one faith, one baptism, and one Father. 6 And He is the perfect Father who leads us all, works through us all, and lives in us all!

- Within the Trinity we see the model of perfect unity-in-diversity.
- **Application:** Churches and believers should reflect this _____ while at the same time embracing differences. Each of us individually, as well as corporate bodies, should be pursuing _____ with the Lord.

2. _____

Philippians 2:5-8 TPT

And consider the example that Jesus, the Anointed One, has set before us. Let his mindset become your motivation. 6 He existed in the form of God, yet he gave no thought to seizing equality with God as his supreme prize. 7 Instead he emptied himself of his outward glory by reducing himself to the form of a lowly servant. He became human! 8 He humbled himself and became vulnerable, choosing to be revealed as a man and was obedient. He was a perfect example, even in his death—a criminal’s death by crucifixion!

- The Father, Son, and Spirit give themselves fully to each other.
- **Application:** We’re called to selfless love, mirroring the generosity we see within the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are called to _____ others without seeking to _____.

3. _____

Matthew 28:18-20 TPT

Then Jesus came close to them and said, “All the authority of the universe has been given to me. 19 Now go in my authority and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. 20 And teach them to faithfully follow all that I have commanded you. And never forget that I am with you every day, even to the completion of this age.

- The Trinity’s outward movement (creation, redemption) invites us to share God’s love.
- Application: God’s life and love overflows to the world, we are to live as _____ to show that love to the lost and dying. When we show God’s love to others we prove that we have experienced it for ourselves.

4. _____

Ephesians 2:18 TPT

And now, because we are united to Christ, we both have equal and direct access in the realm of the Holy Spirit to come before the Father!

Ephesians 3:11-12 TPT

This perfectly wise plan was destined from eternal ages and fulfilled completely in our Lord Jesus Christ, so that now 12 we have boldness through him, and free access as kings before the Father because of our complete confidence in Christ's faithfulness.

- Perichoresis deepens worship, reminding us God is relational and near, not distant. We approach the Father through the Son, by the Spirit
 - **Application:** Let our worship be _____, _____, and _____-_____.
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