

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Join the Conversation Part 2
TITLE: The Trinity
DATE: June 12, 2016
PASTOR: Jim Thompson

This is the first message in our series called Join the Conversation: Part 2. The first installment was aimed at engaging with those who may have some strong skepticism towards Christianity, people who might get frazzled at how some Christians think about hell, homosexuality, science, and so on. We encourage you to go listen to, watch, and share those previous sermons at our web site.

This installment has a slightly different focus: Christians in dialogue with other Christians over 'tougher questions' that are often misunderstood or interpreted differently. The purpose of this series is not to answer every single question, but to help you see the value of these discussions and then take part in them.

In this message, we consider: *How do we think about the Trinity in such a way that it leads to worship and life change?*

Set-up:

- "There is no subject where error is more dangerous, research more laborious, and discovery more fruitful than the oneness of the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." - Augustine
- Too much of the time we rarely consider the significance of the Trinity and, thus, rarely bear its fruit.
- This message is not about proving the Trinity. God is three persons. Each one is fully God. There is one God. Many passages mention each member of the Trinity together, including Matthew 3, Matthew 28, and Ephesians 1.
- Suggestions for further reading:
 1. *Making Sense of the Trinity: Three Crucial Questions* by Millard Erickson
 2. *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* by Fred Sanders
 3. *Communion with God* by John Owens
 4. *An Unpublished Essay on the Trinity* by Jonathan Edwards

Summary of John 14:

- Jesus is speaking, a few hours before he is going to be arrested, just after he told Peter that he was going to deny him. There is a lot of tension, because they all know the religious leaders want to kill Jesus.
- In verses 1-14, Jesus calms their fears with words about the Trinity: Jesus is the faithfulness of God with skin on. Jesus is the promise of God in the flesh. And all of this is because he himself is divine.
- In verses 15-18, Jesus is using fatherly language to say that when the Helper, the Holy Spirit, comes, they will have a fatherly presence with them and in them.
- In verses 25-27, Jesus repeats himself from the first part of the chapter, letting us know there is something about the unity and mission of the Father, Son, and Spirit that should make us realize that God is bigger than our troubles.

Application:

- **Only the triune God of the Bible can be both the Giver and the Gift of salvation.** No other religion can make this claim.
- There should be something in this vision of God that swallows our worry and prods us to gratitude, but our pride and selfishness can get in the way. So God took the initiative to bridge the gap. The Father sent the Son to give his life away, and we're called to do the same!
- **The Father is the Author of salvation. Jesus the Son is the Actor of salvation. And the Holy Spirit is the Applier of salvation.**
- **If you're not living in loving community, you're not really living.** We are divinely designed to be in relationship with the triune God – who is a society unto himself. And we are designed to live in this relationship with others, reflecting God's own communal and loving life.
- Personal life change happens when you care more about life change in others.

For Discussion:

1. Consider Augustine's quote about the Trinity. Jim suggests this refers to, for example, fruit in your communication with your wife, fruit in personal evangelism, fruit in how you think about your budget, or fruit in greater patience and love towards your kids. What needs to change in our approach to God as 'three-in-one' so we can see this kind of fruit blossom in our lives?
2. Is Jesus the anchor for your soul? How does the immensity of the Triune God affect how we can find comfort in God?

3. Are you comfortable discussing the Trinity with your friends and family? If not, what might help you *join the conversation*?