

- The Inseparability of the Trinity- “No sooner do I conceive of the one, then I am illumined by the splendor of the three; no sooner do I distinguish them than I am carried back to the One.” - Gregory of Nazianzus
- They are described as three persons in Scripture: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
  - *In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.*
- You can see from our statement of faith that the identity of each person of the Godhead is intimately connected to what the Bible has to say about their roles in what our statement calls, “the great work of redemption.”
  - That’s vitally important to see. There are vast mysteries in understanding the trinity, as we pointed out last week, but the things we can see most clearly are those things that impact us because of salvation.
    - We saw that the Trinity doesn’t fit any easy molds. If it did, I almost think it wouldn’t be the Father, Son, and Spirit. That’s sort of an awkward connecting of words if you’re going for a helpful image, isn’t it? Why not a Father and his two sons? Or a father, mother, and son?
    - We’re using human language and concepts to describe this infinite being, and need to be careful not to also put human experience onto him, right?
      - For example, what can happen when our human experiences of the word father onto God? Our understanding of God can get pretty messed up! We need to see what Scripture says to us about God as Father.
  - Our salvation works because it has the foundation of a triune God.

- So, this week, I want to show us the doctrine of the Trinity- God in three persons- provides the answers to three questions surrounding “the great work of redemption.” Next week and probably the week after, we’ll break down and get a little more specific about each person- the Father, Son, and Spirit- and things we can and can’t say about each of those.
- Why is God love?
  - This is something we love, rightly, to talk about. God is love. He loves his people. He is loving. And there are a lot of things we can say about that that on the surface don’t seem connected to the trinity, but it’s actually the Trinity itself that provides the greatest, and deepest answer to that question.
  - John 17.
    - First, note the preexistence of the Son in verses 5, 18, and 24.
      - This is the Son talking about existence before either the world, or time, began. He was with the Father, and the Father shared both glory and something else with the Son. This shows the eternal nature of the Trinity. It didn’t just start at some point.
    - Now, lets read 24 and 25 again, and see how Jesus marks the relationship that was going on before the world began as one that was fundamentally loving. What was happening before the world began as the Father loved the Son, simply spills over into time and history here. It didn’t begin with the incarnation, it simply continued and created something incredibly beautiful for us.

- Because we believe that God has eternally been the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit, we believe that God has eternally been loving. There has been no time when God the Father was not loving the Son and the Spirit, and vice versa. If you believe in a religion that says that there is only one person to God, then how could God actually love something else unless he had something to love? Love needs an object. And he would be dependent on that something else in order to love.
  - But God the Father has been loving since eternity past because there were three persons who have always and forever existed together. He didn't need to create us in order to discover how to love. This is actually really crucial, and really cool too. In human terms, we might say, "I never knew what it was to love until I got married. And then I realized I still didn't understand love until I had kids. But that's not the case with God. ***He created us, and it was already His nature to be loving.*** So when we rebelled against him in sin, it was His love that moved him to send His Son.
- "God's love is an eternal love, that had no beginning, that shall have no ending; that cannot be heightened by any act of ours, that cannot be lessened by anything in us." - John Owen.
- So we can say the foundation of our understanding of God's love is actually the Trinity.
- Why can we be saved?
  - 1 John 4:7-17 (first, recall 3:1- See what kind of love the FATHER has given to us, that we should be called children of God.)

- John lays this out in trinitarian terms and it builds on that love that God has. We know the Father loves us. How do we know that? Because He gave the Son for us. How else do we have that confirmed for us? Because in verse 13, he's given us the Spirit. There's something deeply trinitarian about God's love.
    - We know of it because of the activity of all three persons in redeeming us. And love motivates all three.
      - Jesus freely agrees to his part of this redemptive work. He tells us he has authority to lay down his life and take it up again. He's not being coerced. He is operating out of the same divine love the Father has.
  - Romans 3:21-26
    - How can God be just and the justifier? How could he possibly pour out his eternal wrath, and receive his eternal wrath at the same time?
      - The Father and the Son, each taking on this problem, and filling their roles.
      - This shows the divinity of each person of the trinity.
- How can we live the Christian life?
  - First, we have it defined for us because of the trinity, don't we? What are Christians, after all?
    - Children of God! We know what we are because of the way the Trinity reveals the Father as Father, and the Son as Son. It's a family relationship that we've been brought into.

- So, we live with a perfect heavenly father. One who loves us, and provides for us, and disciplines us.
- Second, we have access into the family because of the justification that came through the work of the Son.
  - Romans 8:1
  - When we think of living the Christian life, we have to be freed from a focus on our performance as the thing that allows us to be in God's family. The Son provides that. It was his perfect performance as a Son that was freely given to us, and so we trust in His work to be a child of the Father, sharing in all the Father has given to the Son.
- And third, we can actually remain in this family, and live like one of the family because it wasn't just the Father who showed his love by sending the Son, and it wasn't just the Son who showed his love by coming and sacrificing himself for our sins, it was also the Spirit who gave himself to us.
  - Think about that sentence in light of all we've been saying about God's godness, his power, his eternal existence. The Spirit didn't just give us strength. He gave himself to us. This shows us that Spirit must be eternal, and divine, just as the Father and the Son are, in order to bring us into this relationship that will last forward into eternity.
  - Let's end with Romans 8:1-17.
  - These three questions are arguably the three most important questions we ought to wrestle with, practically speaking. And at the bottom of each answer is the understanding of the Trinity. Without the

eternal Father, eternal Son, and eternal Spirit, we lose the cohesiveness of each of these answers.