

To Glorify and Enjoy God

LESSON 6: A TRIUNE GOD TO GLORIFY & ENJOY

Intro:

“The Trinity is not an irrational doctrine, but it is highly mysterious. It is not contradictory, but we do not always see clearly how apparent contradictions can be resolved.” **John Frame**³¹

BIG IDEA: The Trinity is a holy _____ we can glorify & enjoy.

WSC Q 6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A: There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

WLC 9: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A: There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

WLC 10: What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead?

A: It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Spirit to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

WLC 11: How does it appear that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God equal with the Father?

The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God equal with the Father, ascribing to them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. *WCF*, II

The Oneness of God: Unity & Essence

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **Deuteronomy 6**

- Judaism, and therefore Christianity, is a _____ religion. There is _____ God.
- Speaking about the oneness of God: _____ & _____.
- “One” does not require a _____ meaning. Gen. 2:24 referring to spouses being “one flesh.”
- Marriage is a _____ that contains _____.

³¹ Frame, 2002, pp. 705.

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- Given in the context of the _____ => There is only one _____ Lord!
- The oneness of God calls for us to be _____ in our love toward that God.

“The undivided God of the Shema should be loved with an undivided love.” **Tim Chester**³²

...we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” ...⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. **1 Corinthians 8**

- Paul refers to the _____ in vs. 4. He knows “the Lord is one.”
- There is one God, revealed as the _____.
- The Lord, often used in the Septuagint for YHWH, is Jesus the _____.
- There are not _____ YHWH’s, but the Father & the Son are YHWH.
- “Yet while we can say Jesus is Yahweh, we cannot say Yahweh is Jesus.”³³

³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. **Deuteronomy 4** (see also Deut. 32:39)

- The Exodus showed the Israelites that only _____ is God.
- To break the 1st commitment is _____ against reality.
- It is about exclusive _____ to the only Creator & Redeemer.

... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ... **Matthew 28**

- “Name” is _____. The name is YHWH, and all _____ are YHWH.
- We do not hold to _____. Father, Son & Spirit are not 3 _____ Gods.
- They are 3 _____, distinct persons, in the one _____.

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” **Matthew 3**

- The Son is being _____, first with _____ and then with the _____.

³² Chester, Tim. *Delighting in the Trinity: Why Father, Son and Spirit are Good News*. The Good Book Company. 2010, pp. 33.

³³ Chester, pp. 56.

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- The Spirit, descending like a dove, _____ on the Son.
- The Father _____ to identify Jesus as “my beloved Son.”

...² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:... **1 Peter 1**

- We have been _____ “*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.*”
- We have been _____ by the Spirit.
- We’ve been _____ or cleansed by the Son’s blood. We are to _____ the Son.
- They work together for our salvation. Though different roles they are united in purpose.

Benedictions

²⁴The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. **Numbers 6**

- Frame notes the three-fold _____ of the Lord in this blessing.
- The three-fold blessings are _____ but not _____.

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **2 Corinthians 13**

- Paul utilizes a three-fold _____ as well.
- He invokes “the Lord Jesus Christ”, “God” and “the Holy Spirit.”

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. **1 Corinthians 12**

- We see the _____ of the Spirit who is at work in God’s people.
- The “same Lord” points us to Jesus the Son whom we _____.
- We see the “same God”. Paul typically uses God to refer to the _____.
- Same, used all 3 times, stresses the _____ of God.

⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **Ephesians 4**

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- A whole lot of “one”s going on here. Pointing to the _____ of all these things.
- “one body” or one _____ though there are many _____.
- “one Spirit”, “one Lord” referring to the _____, and “one God and Father of all”.

How the Church Has Understood This (and others misunderstood)

- The church struggled to understand the _____ and _____ of God.
- One problem was that of _____.
- The Eastern Church spoke _____, and the Western _____.

Terms Expressing God’s Oneness and Threeness ³⁴	Greek	Latin	English
One	<i>Ousia, physis</i>	<i>Substantia, essential</i>	Being, substance, essence, nature
Three	<i>Hypostasis, prosopa</i>	<i>Personae</i>	Persons, subsistences, modes of subsistence

“The Latin ‘one substance’ sounded Sabellian to the Greeks: for it seemed that what the Greeks numbered as three, the Latins numbered as one. And similarly, the Greek “three hypostaseis” sounded Arian or even tritheistic to the Latins- as if the Latins believed in one divine substance, one God, and the Greeks believed in three. These suspicions were even more encouraged by the fact that Sabellianism was predominantly a Western (Latin) heresy, and Arianism was a predominantly Eastern (Greek) heresy. And the Latins preferred persona (originally, “mask”) to denote the Threeness of God, a term with a significant history in Sabellianism.”³⁵

- **Sabellianism** or _____ stressed the _____ of God.
- God essentially wore three _____ in _____.
- Tertullian was the first to distinguish between _____ & _____.
- *Persona* had a meaning in court, and the theater. It referred to a _____.
- Greek theologians used hypostasis, “to stand under” or a _____.
- “Essence” referred to _____, one that was self-existence.
- To exist was used by them to describe infinite, contingent creatures.
- Subsistence means “to stand under” but was used for _____ in the West.

Confused yet?

³⁴ Frame, 2002, pp. 697.

³⁵ Frame, 2002, pp. 699-700.

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“Their mode of subsistence in the one substance must ever continue to us a profound mystery, as it transcends all analogy.” **A.A. Hodge**³⁶

“The theologians were saying that the personal distinctions of the Godhead are to be understood not as three distinct existences, but as three subsistences; so the distinction in the Godhead of the three persons is *real*, but not *essential*. ...

“In saying that the distinctions between the three persons in the Godhead are not essential, I mean that there are no differences of essence, because they are all one essence. But within that one essence, there are three distinct subsistences- three things not *outside* the essence, but *within* the very being of God- and we distinguish them as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. ...

“The church was being extremely careful at this point to affirm the full deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and at the same time to steer clear of tritheism or polytheism. ...

“The subsistences, or persons, are more than offices, more than modes, more than activities, more than masks, and more than ways of appearing. In a sense the church was saying that we do not understand *how* God is three in one.” **R.C. Sproul**³⁷

Why a Trinity?

²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. **John 17**

- The Father _____ the Son before creation.
- “Before he ever created, before he ever ruled the world, before anything else, this God was a Father loving His Son.”³⁸
- Arius started from the wrong starting point: God as the _____ of everything.
- He then saw the Son as _____ since sons are _____ or begotten.
- Athanasius started with passages like this: God as Father _____ His Son.
- After all, the Son exegetes, or _____ or makes known the Father (John 1:18).

“Since God is, before all things, a Father, and not primarily Creator or Ruler, all his ways are beautifully fatherly.” **Michael Reeves**³⁹

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ... ¹⁶ So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **1 John 4**

³⁶ Hodge, pp. 58.

³⁷ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 69-70.

³⁸ Reeves, Michael. *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove, IVP Academic. 2012, pp. 21.

³⁹ Reeves, pp. 23.

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- Augustine viewed this as _____ of the Trinity.
- An eternal being, who is love, must have _____ or something _____ to love.
- The Father, Son and Spirit are an _____ community of _____.
- “Just as a fountain, to be a fountain, must pour forth water, so the Father, to be Father, must give out life.”⁴⁰
- “If there were once a time when the Son didn’t exist, then there was once a time when the Father was not yet a Father.”⁴¹
- Gregory of Nyssa: as a lamp cannot be without _____, the glorious Father must have the Son as His _____ (Heb. 1:3)
- “The Spirit stirs up the delight of the Father in the Son and the delight of the Son in the Father, inflaming their love and so binding them together in the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”⁴²
- As God, each of them is to be worshiped and glorified.
- **Ontological Trinity**: as they are in _____. Equally God, _____ divine.
- “God is the only one who can love alone, for Trinitarian reasons: God the Father loves God the Son in the love of God the Holy Spirit.”⁴³
- **Economic Trinity**: as they are in relation to _____.
- “They mutually love one another, act upon and through one another, and take counsel together.”⁴⁴

“And so it is with the Spirit: as a person he speaks and sends (Acts 13:2, 4); he chooses (Acts 20:28), teaches (John 14:26), gives (Is 63:14); he can be lied to and tested (Acts 5:3, 9); he can be resisted (Acts 7:51), grieved (Is 63:10; Eph 4:30) and blasphemed (Mt 12:31).” **Michael Reeves**⁴⁵

How does this help you glorify and enjoy God?

⁴⁰ Reeves, pp. 26.

⁴¹ Reeves, pp. 27.

⁴² Reeves, pp. 29.

⁴³ Sanders, Fred. *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*. Wheaton, Crossway. 2010, pp. 63.

⁴⁴ Hodge, pp. 59.

⁴⁵ Reeves, pp. 32.