

The Trinity: The Shape of the Gospel

1. The Trinity: Not a Math Problem, but the Pattern of the Gospel

The Trinity isn't an abstract puzzle, it's the heart of the gospel.

- When we ask *What is God like?* we look at His attributes.
- When we ask *Who is God?* we meet the Father, Son, and Spirit.

"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 1:1–4 ESV)

The Trinity in the Gospel:

- The gospel is from the Father, through the Son, and is applied by the Spirit.
- The Spirit draws you to the Son, who brings you to the Father.
- The Trinity shows us that God is love, eternally.

"The Trinity is not a speculative abstraction but the fountain of all grace."
—Herman Witsius

Question:

Do you view the Trinity as a confusing or impractical? Or as the fountain of all grace?

2. The Father Has Always Loved the Son

God has always been a loving Father, because He has always had a Son.

"Father, 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 17:24 ESV)

- God didn't become loving because He *is* love.

Question:

How does the Trinity demonstrate that God is love?

3. No Trinity, No Gospel

The gospel only makes sense if God is triune.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith." (Romans 3:23–25 ESV)

- Only the Father could send the Son.
- Only the Son could give Himself.
- Only the Spirit can bring us to trust and receive this gift.

"This is the sum of the gospel: that the Father, out of love, gave the Son; the Son, out of grace, gave Himself; and the Spirit, out of power, applies it all to us."
—John Owen

Question:

How does seeing salvation through the lens of the Trinity deepen your understanding of grace?

4. Not Just Forgiven—Adopted as Sons

Through the Trinity, we're not just saved—we're welcomed into God's family.

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..." (Romans 8:14–16 ESV)

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son... so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:4–6 ESV)

"And he said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'" (Mark 14:36 ESV)

- “Abba” is what Jesus said to the Father, and now we can too.
- Adoption is the goal of salvation: sharing in the love between Father and Son.

Question:

What would change in your life if you believed the Father delights in you like He delights in Jesus?

5. A Gospel of Love, Not Success

The triune God saves us out of abundance, not need.

- Other religions focus on performance or success.
- But God is not lonely or lacking. He has always been full of joy and love within Himself.
- Salvation cannot be earned. It can only be freely given, and received by faith.

Question:

How does the triune nature of God contrast with other religions' views of God?

Glossary

Trinity

God is one being in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three are truly God and have always existed in perfect unity.

Matthew 28:19 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Person

A real, distinct someone within the one God. The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Spirit.

John 14:26 – “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things...”

Essence (or Nature)

The divine being or “God-ness” that simply *is* the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Deuteronomy 6:4 – “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

Eternal

God has no beginning or end. All three persons have always existed.

John 1:1–2 – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”

Equal

The Father, Son, and Spirit are all truly and equally God. There is no other 4th “thing” called God that they share in but the three persons themselves are the divine essence.

John 10:30 – “I and the Father are one.”

Working Together (Inseparable Operations)

Everything God does is done by all three persons together.

Hebrews 9:14 – “How much more will the blood of Christ... offered through the eternal Spirit to God...”

Eternal Generation of the Son

The Son has always come from the Father, not by being created but by being eternally begotten.

John 5:26 – “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”

Procession of the Spirit

The Spirit has always proceeded from the Father and the Son.

John 15:26 – “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father... he will bear witness about me.”

Divine Simplicity

God is not made up of individual parts. His love, power, and justice are all perfectly one in Him.

Exodus 3:14 – “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’”

Modalism (False Teaching)

The wrong idea that God is just one person who takes on different roles (like an actor with different masks).

Subordinationism (False Teaching)

The false view that the Son or Spirit is less divine than the Father.

God in Himself/God in Creation

- **God in Himself:** Who God is eternally. The Father eternally begets the Son, and the Father and Son eternally breath out the Spirit in loving fellowship.
 - **God in Creation:** How God works in history. The Father sends, Son saves, Spirit applies.
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Communion/Fellowship with God

Because of Jesus, we can have communion with the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

1 John 1:3 – “Indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

Shared Life (Mutual Indwelling)

The Father, Son, and Spirit live in perfect love and unity, yet are never mixed or confused.

John 14:11 – “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”