

## Digging Deep: Exploring the Joy of Systematic Theology

### Class 14: The Doctrine of God, part 10

#### *The Trinity*

*"... this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

**John 17. 3**

#### **I. Three foundational truths as we consider the doctrine of the Trinity:**

1. **The doctrine of the Trinity is absolutely essential to the Christian faith.** In fact, you cannot hold to the Christian faith without believing that God is a triune God.

*Go therefore & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit ...*

**Matthew 28.19**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit...*

**Apostle's Creed**

2. **Grasping the doctrine of the Trinity requires a faithful study of the Scripture more than an advanced degree in theology!**

- The doctrine of the Trinity is a Scriptural truth; that is, our triune God has revealed Himself to us.

*One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD...*

**PSALM 27.4**

- Therefore, we must rest on the Scriptures to inform our understanding of the Trinity, rather than examples from our imagination!

3. **We must not settle in our thinking, theology, or conversations for a generic, general "God."**

*"... and may God bless the United States of America."*

Just about every US president!

*O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes regarding your faith; say nothing about Allah except the truth.<sup>1</sup> The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger of Allah and the fulfilment of His Word through Mary and a spirit 'created by a command' from Him.<sup>2</sup> So believe in Allah and His messengers and do not say, "Trinity." Stop!—for your own good. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him! He is far above having a son! To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And Allah is sufficient as a Trustee of Affairs.*

**Quran, Surah 4. 171**

## II. Two important & related questions –

### 1. What is God's primary identity?

*O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

**John 17. 25-26**

*... no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.*

**Matthew 11.27**

*No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

**John 1.18**

*For you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from old is your name.*

**Isaiah 63.16**

The most foundational thing in God is not some abstract quality, but the fact that he is Father. Since God is, before all things, a Father, and not primarily a Creator or Ruler, all his ways are beautifully fatherly. It is not that this God "does" Father as a day job, only to kick back in the evenings as plain old "God." It is not that he has a nice blob of fatherly icing on top. He is Father. All the way down. Thus all that he does he does as Father.

That is who he is. He creates as a Father and he rules as a Father; and that means the way he rules over creation is most unlike the way any other God would rule over creation ...

Only when we see that God rules his creation as a kind and loving Father that we will be moved to delight in his providence. We might acknowledge that the rule of some heavenly policeman was just, but we could never take delight in his regime as we can delight in the tender care of a father.

*Michael Reeves, Delighting in the Trinity*

### 2. What was God doing before creation?

*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**

*The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand ...  
For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.*

**John 3. 35; 5.20**

*... a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

**Matthew 3.17**

*I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father ...  
Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*

**John 14. 31; 4.34**