

CREDO 1

GOD IS – The Doctrine of the Trinity

Tonight we're going to embark on a twelve week series titled **CREDO**. CREDO = Latin for I BELIEVE. In this series going to follow the storyline of the Bible and define / unpack the **essential doctrines** of Christianity.

Some hear the word doctrine and they immediately think of stuffy theologians and divisive denominationalism. A lot of people think of their Christianity as being primarily relational and emotional. They don't want to talk about doctrine because they think of doctrine as cold and impersonal — a thing that is the opposite of personal and relational. But without sound doctrine we can't have healthy, loving sound relationships. EVERYTHING about life (who we are, how we live) is tied to and flows from our understanding of God.

DOCTRINE = WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE.

More than ever culture has taught us to **think** with our **feelings**. That has shaped the way the average man and woman process this thing called "faith". They approach faith and life in Jesus on the basis of what they feel about the Christian faith — rather than what the Bible says.

This series is going to challenge us to THINK about the Christian faith! You may not like school — but for the next 12 Monday Nights you are IN SCHOOL! Throughout this series we are going to exercise our minds in loving God! (Jesus said that we're to love God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our MIND and all of our strength — [Mark 12:30](#)).

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones had this to say about the subject of Doctrine. He is one of my favorite authors. Born in Wales, he became a medical doctor in London. When he was on the brink of becoming one of the doctors for the royal family he left medicine to become a pastor. He became one of the greatest Bible expositors in modern history.

QUOTE: D.M. L-J — *The doctrines of the Bible are not a subject to be studied (academically); rather we should desire to know them in order*

*that, having known them, we may not be `puffed up' with knowledge, and excited about our information, but may **draw nearer to God in worship, praise, and adoration, because we have seen, in a fuller way that we have ever seen before, the glory of our wondrous God.** May He give us cause to do this, and grant that as a result of these doctrines, **we may all come to know Him**, the only true and living God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent - and as a result may all be revived. And so I express the hope that through us, and others like us, the whole Church may be revived, and that we may witness again in our midst the manifestation of God's glorious power.*

Our world is filled with people who have a deep longing for God. You might know someone, or you might be that someone who says — *I'm an atheist and have no desire for God.* Others might say — *I'm an agnostic and I'm not sure if there is a God, let alone long for "Him" or "her" or "it."* But even the atheist and agnostic have a deep longing for God — That longing is seen in the fact that even the atheist wants to be loved — wants relationships — wants to belong.

Because of the deep desire to speak and be spoken to technology continues to explode at an exponential rate. When I taught through this series in 2010 there were 500 million people using Facebook. In the last decade the number of users that visit Facebook on a daily basis has more than tripled (1.73 billion) and the number of those who visit Facebook monthly is 2.6 billion.

According to CTIA, **6 billion** SMS messages are sent each day in the US, over 180 billion are sent each month, and 2.27 trillion are sent each year. According to Portio Research, the world will send 8.3 trillion SMS messages this year alone – 23 billion per day or almost 16 million per minute.

People are LONGING to speak and be spoken to.

We will see tonight, and in the next weeks that these DEEP LONGINGS are rooted in the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God.

We are approaching this series with great anticipation and prayer because

the subject in this series is God — who alone can answer those deep longings. Man can NEVER rise above his concept of God. A faulty view of God results in human suffering. There is NOTHING more important than answering the question – ***Who is my God? Who do I believe in? Who do I worship? Who do I hope to see in eternity?***

Tonight’s subject is all about who God is. We will see that Bible plainly declares that God IS and the He exists as a Trinity.

TRINITY

The word *trinity* does not appear in Scripture. But the concept very clearly does. The church father **Tertullian** (AD 155–220) was the first to use the word *trinity* in an effort to summarize the totality of who God is.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT: To say that God exists as a trinity does not mean there are three Gods (tritheism); or that there is one God who is not three persons (Unitarianism); or that there is one God who merely manifests himself as either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit on various occasions (Modalism).

QUESTION: WHAT is the Trinity.

DEFINITION: The Trinity is ONE God who eternally exists as three distinct persons, the Father Son and Holy Spirit — each fully and equally God.

QUOTE: J.I. Packer, *Affirming the Apostles Creed* — *How the one eternal God is eternally both singular and plural, how Father, Son, and Spirit are personally distinct yet essentially one is more than we can know, and any attempt to “explain” it—to dispel the mystery by reasoning, as distinct from confessing it from Scripture—is bound to falsify it. Here, as elsewhere, our God is too big for his creatures’ little minds.*

QUOTE: Augustine — (4th century theologian, philosopher, and the bishop of Hippo in Roman North Africa)

If you deny the Trinity you lose your soul --- If you try to explain it you

lose your mind!

By way of tonight's study, we hope to avoid BOTH

LET'S BREAK DOWN THE DEFINITION OF THE TRINITY

The Trinity is ONE God (monotheism)

Who eternally exists (never a time when the Father, Son and Spirit didn't exist)

This ONE God Who eternally exists — exists as three distinct persons.

“Person” does not mean that God the **Father** or God the **Spirit** became human beings (God the Son did). Rather, it means that each member of the Trinity thinks, acts, feels, speaks, and relates because they are persons as opposed impersonal forces.

Three distinct persons Father Son and Spirit who are each FULLY and EQUALLY God

FULLY = The Divine attributes aren't divided into thirds. They each FULLY possess attributes of God such as eternity — omniscience — omnipotence — and omnipresence.

EQUALLY = One is not more God than the other

SO – The Trinity is ONE God - Who eternally exists as three distinct persons – Father, Son and Spirit - Each FULLY and EQUALLY God.

CRUCIAL: If the doctrine of the Trinity is truly Biblical — it will hold to **all of the truth** that God revealed about Himself in Scripture, **without dismissing or diminishing any of that truth.**

Let's walk through the truths the Scriptures declare about God.

There is only One God.

That runs in the face of the countless people who claim that every religious system and ideology — along with all of the deities they worship — are equally valid.

But here is what the Bible says! The Bible **emphatically** states that there is but **ONE TRUE and LIVING God**.

***Deuteronomy 4:35** To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him.*

***Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me;*

***Psalms 86:10** For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.*

***Isaiah 43:10** “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.*

***Isaiah 45:5** I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;*

***1 Timothy 1:17** To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever Amen.*

***1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.*

All other gods are demonic false gods.

In speaking to His Father — Jesus called “. . . the only true God” (John 17:3). The inference is clear — any other gods were FALSE gods.

The same was true in the Old Testament where every people group that surrounded the nation of Israel worshipped countless false gods.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE other gods? This is going to be polarizing and controversial. Any religion other than Christianity worship demons. Demons are very REAL — very POWERFUL spiritual entities — fallen angels created by God — that joined Satan in his rebellion against the God of the Bible. Along with Satan they are in opposition to the One, True Living God. The Bible says that they masquerade as “angels of light” (2 Cor 11:14). They perform counterfeit signs and miracles.

Today it is very fashionable for people to describe themselves as SPIRITUAL! You have probably heard people say — “He/she is a very spiritual person.” Or “I don’t consider my self religious but I am very spiritual.” You want to be very careful to not be merely “spiritual.” You see — there are spiritual beings that love the God of the Bible — but there are also fallen angels who love Satan and have joined him in his rebellion against the God of the Bible.

To plug into the spiritual world is to potentially plug into a demon. The Bible says this in the Old and New Testament.

“They sacrificed to demons that were no gods” (Deut. 32:17).

Peoples in the Old Testament went through all sorts of “spiritual” activity and rituals – but they did so to demons, not to God. (1 Kings 18 the prophets of Ba-al on Mt. Carmel).

In the New Testament we read

“. . . what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons” (1 Cor. 10:20).

We must never think that other religions are not worshipping powerful spiritual beings. We must never say that people involved in those religions don’t have powerful spiritual experiences. They can have very POWERFUL spiritual experiences — But the ORIGIN of those experiences is NOT the Trinitarian God of the Bible. Their experiences are demonic in origin. Allah is a demon! He is different than Yahweh of the Bible. There are demons that PRETEND to be God and want you to worship them as God. And if

you are just religious or spiritual you are participating with demons.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God

The litmus test: Do they honor Jesus as the unique and Only begotten Son of God

The term trinity is the way that theologians have articulated 2 truths

- 1.) There is ONE God
- 2.) The Father Son and Spirit ARE God.

So, let's see where the Bible says that the Father, Son and Spirit ARE God.

1.) The Father is God.

John's Gospel - "God the Father" (John 6:27).

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians - ". . . there is one God, the Father" (1 Cor. 8:6).

So – The Father IS God. That the Father IS God is so generally accepted that even the heretics of the Church got this one right. Even the cults see this. **The next is more debated**

2.) The Son is God.

WHERE do we find this in the Bible?

"In the beginning (an echo of Genesis 1:1) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . (John 1:1)

So whoever the Word is – He was WITH God the Father and He **IS** God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

So Jesus – God the Son ---- was WITH God the Father and He **IS** God – and He became a man.

“Truly, truly, I [Jesus] say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58)

It says in the next verse that the religious leaders picked up stones to kill him for having made that claim. It says in **John 10** that Jesus asked – “*Do you want to kill me because I healed a man on the Sabbath?*” And the religious leaders replied – *We don’t want to kill you for healing on the Sabbath – but because you, being a man, have claimed to be God.*

When Jesus said – *Before Abraham I was, I am* — He was declaring that He was from Eternity past God — that He pre-existed Abraham — that He was Abraham’s God. “*I am*” comes out of **Exodus 3:14** where God spoke to Moses from out of the Burning Bush – *Tell them that I AM has sent you.* Jesus is saying – I am God — I am the God of Abraham — I am the God of Moses. That is why the fiercely monotheistic Jews wanted to kill Him.

John 20:28 “Thomas answered him [Jesus], ‘My Lord and my God!’”

Rom. 9:5 “. . . Christ who is God over all”

Titus 2:13 “. . . our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”

1 John 5:20 “. . . Jesus Christ. He is **the** true God”

SUMMARIZE - THERE IS ONE GOD –

The Father is God; the Son is God

AND ---

3.) The Spirit is God.

The first thing we want to set straight is that the Holy Spirit is a “he” and not an “it.” To call the Holy Spirit an IT means that you see the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force – that permeates creation

like the pantheist (God and the universe are one and the same – God is the tree / the tree is God)

or the panentheist (meaning God is one with the physical universe and yet transcends it)

The Holy Spirit is NOT an it – He is a HE. The Holy Spirit is a person and not an impersonal force. The Scriptures ascribe to Him the attributes of personality. The Holy Spirit can be grieved **Eph. 4:30**. An impersonal force cannot be grieved. You can't grieve gravity. We are also told that He can be resisted **Acts 7:51**. As the Holy Spirit seeks to INSTRUCT us and LEAD us and GUIDE us, we can RESIST Him. We are also told in **Heb. 10:29** that He can be INSULTED.

You can't insult gravity or electricity. The Holy Spirit is insulted by lies and the promotion of false doctrine. So the Holy Spirit is a HE (not an it)

And the Holy Spirit IS GOD!

“Now the Lord is the Spirit (important – “Lord” is a title given to God), and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from (and Paul says it again) the Lord who is the Spirit.” 2 Cor. 3:17–18.

In the **Book of Acts** There was a couple in the newly birthed Church who decided to sell a piece of property and give a portion of the sale to the church – but acted as if they had given the whole amount of the sale to the church — Here is what the apostle Peter said

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? . . . You have not lied to men but to God’.” Acts 5:3–4

THERE IS ONE GOD. God the Father is God. God the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Bring those together and we come up with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

THIS IS SO HUGE —

There's a verse in **1 John** where we find three amazing words!

1 John 4:8 *“God IS love”*

The God who IS — God who eternally exists in three distinct persons — Father, Son and Spirit — IS LOVE.

GUYS — It is only in the light of the Trinity that we can UNDERSTAND LOVE!

APART from the Triune God we have NO IDEA what love is.

Remember the comment I made earlier: *“Man cannot rise above His concept of God.”* Apart from God man has reduced love to sentimentality. Apart from God man has reduced love to sensuality. We do not understand love until we go to the source of love; until we see what the TRINITY IS. It is there and only there that we see what true love IS — how true love acts — what true love looks like.

Some say that God created us because He was lonely and wanted someone to love. God lacks nothing. He does not need us. Within the perfect Trinitarian nature of God there was perfect love! PERFECT Relationship — Friendship — Unity between the Father, Son and Spirit. The statement *“God is Love”* only makes sense in light of the fact that God is a perfectly loving Trinity. We see this in the Gospel of John — where God the Son leaves eternity and enters into time as the man Jesus Christ --- and as man Jesus said in [John 3:35](#) *“The Father loves the Son,”* and in [John 14:31](#), *“I love the Father.”*

The ESSENCE of the TRINITY is LOVE. Jesus says — The Father loves Me, and I love the Father. The Bible says that Holy Spirit loves Jesus — desiring that Jesus be glorified in the hearts of men and women. THIS doctrine of the Trinity is so crucial in regards to you and me; because we were made to LOVE and BE LOVED.

COMMON QUESTION: Do we see the Trinity in the Old Testament?

Well let’s start in the Book of Beginnings — [Genesis](#) — Because that’s where the revelation of God begins. Let’s look at the first verse of the Bible

“In the beginning, God (the word for God is Elohim — it is in the plural)

created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And (notice who was there) the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” Gen. 1:1–2.

In the beginning God – This was not a coincidental beginning to the book of beginnings. This is divinely strategic! This is divinely deliberate! The one who is the author and the subject of the Bible is saying: **FIRST things FIRST**. FIRST you have to know who God is.

This generation of Christians want to start with — ***But what about life and love and family and cultures and justice and human rights and economics and politics***. **None** of those are SMALL things. **All** of those things are noble things. But we have to understand that they are secondary things — secondary in this sense: Our understanding of those things begins with the Triune God who is the source of life — the essence of love — the archetype of community — the architect of culture — the one whose ways are always just — the ultimate champion of human rights because He created humanity.

So we have ***IN THE BEGINNING GOD*** — We see God creating (we will get to this in our third time together. **Who** do we see active in creation ---- the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Check This Out — A **Targum** is an accepted Jewish translation and interpretation of the Old Testament. The Jewish scholars would translate and interpret the Old Testament and they would validate them as accepted Targum. **There is a manuscript called the Targum Neofiti** — which is dated over 200 years BC and 500 years before the council of Nicaea where the Christian theologians officially declared the doctrine of the Trinity as true orthodoxy.

Here is how the Targum Neofiti reads Genesis 1

*In the beginning by **the first born*** — Who is that? That is a term used in the New Testament speaking of Jesus (**Heb. 12:23; Rev 1:5**). In **Col. 1:15** Paul said that Jesus is *the visible image of the invisible God and that He is the First Born of all creation* — that is a term that ascribes preeminence and rulership over all creation.

In the beginning by the first born (that’s Jesus), God (that’s the father) created the heavens and the earth... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the

waters.

There were Jews living 200 years BEFORE the coming of Jesus who were waiting the coming of Jesus — and believed the opening verses of the Old Testament to be Trinitarian. They believed that the Father — through the First Born, Jesus, along with the Holy Spirit — created everything. TRINITARIAN

Now look at **Genesis 1:26** in light of what we just looked at

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” **Gen. 1:26.**

That makes NO SENSE apart from the doctrine of the trinity. WHO is the US and the OUR? God the Father — God the Son — God the Holy Spirit.

After sin entered the world we read

Gen. 3:22 “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us’”

At the Tower of Babel

Gen. 11:6-7 “And the LORD said . . . ‘Come, let us . . .’”

There are echoes of the Trinity from the BEGINNING of the Book of Beginnings. **At the very least** we have in **Genesis 1:1-2** God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. And we have Jewish tradition that says “We see Jesus there as well.”

Let’s look at TWO OTHER PLACES in the Old Testament

Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ — “And now the Lord GOD [Father] has sent me [Jesus], and his Spirit” (**Isa. 48:16**). The Father would send the Son with the Spirit. This is exactly what Jesus said. In John’s Gospel alone, more than 20 times, Jesus said — “*The Father has sent Me.*” Then Jesus says in John’s Gospel — *When I leave I will send you the Holy Spirit.* ALL of those are a fulfillment of **Isaiah 48:16**.

Again — Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ — “The Spirit of the Lord GOD [Father] is upon me [Jesus], because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (**Isa. 61:1**).

This is hundreds of years before **Luke 4**. There in **Luke 4** Jesus reads in the synagogue of Nazareth — and reads from Isaiah 61 and says — “*TODAY THIS IS FULFILLED in Me.*” Jesus KNEW that He — as the second person of the

Trinity – was fulfilling [Isaiah 61:1](#)

Here a few New Testament references to the Trinity

Concerning the birth of Jesus

[Luke 1:35](#) And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

Mary was perplexed as to the MEANS she would conceive without having sex. The angel told her that God the Father and God the Spirit would give her the ability to give birth to God the Son.

Again — surrounding the birth of Jesus

[Matthew 1:20-23](#) “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, ²³and they shall call his name Immanuel”

The baptism of Jesus

[Matthew 3:16-17](#) 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; ¹⁷and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

God the Father speaking from heaven. God the Son coming up out of the water. God the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus, anointing with power for His public ministry. God graciously giving to us this wonderful family portrait of the Trinity.

The Great Commission of Jesus — After Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave for our salvation -- -just before ascending into heaven Jesus

said

Matt. 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in **the** name (singular – one name) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

When we baptize new believers we baptize them in the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit.

In the N.T we have the TRINITY clearly defined in its economy

Theologians speak of the IMMANENT Trinity and the ECONOMIC Trinity. The IMMINEENT Trinity is how God is within Himself. The ECONOMIC Trinity is how God works in history.

In regards to our salvation we can see the ECONOMIC Trinity.

We see the Trinity working in harmony – working in agreement – but each Person of the Trinity has a role to play

1 Peter 1:2 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:

God the Father foreknew whom He would save. God the Son came and shed His blood for our sins. God the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us to accomplish the work of sanctify us, cleanse and conform us to the image of Jesus.

I would encourage you to read EPHESIANS 1:1-13. That whole section is one unit of thought — and in it you see the ECONOMY of the Godhead in our salvation. Paul said that

IN LOVE the Father predestined us unto salvation before the foundation of the earth

The Son came to this earth to die in our place for our sins and that He

rose for our salvation.

And that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian regenerating their heart and renewing their mind and that the Holy Spirit Himself is the seal upon our lives guaranteeing our salvation

ALL to the praise of the glory of His grace.

HUGE CONCEPT — The entire Christian life is Trinitarian! We now live BY the Spirit THROUGH the SON and TO the father.

What is the HISTORY of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Irenaeus all taught and defended the doctrine. Tertullian is one of the first to use the language of the trinity to describe all that the Bible says about the ONE God — THREE Persons, Father, Son and Spirit Eternally equal in every way.

SOME SAY – It took a long time for the Doctrine of the Trinity to develop. I believe that it was held to (the internal evidence and harmony of the Old and New Testament Scriptures). But it was questioned by some — there were heretics and false teachers. There needed to be CLARIFICATION. It wasn't a matter of taking a long time for it to develop. REALITY is that for 300 years Christians were being fed to wild beasts, burned alive and crucified --- Pastors were being beheaded. That is not exactly a culture conducive to theological treatises. Evangelism and survival was at the top of the to-do list! ONCE persecution died down they started to clarify their beliefs.

At the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) they clearly articulated the doctrine of the Trinity. In Constantinople (381 AD) — they lay down the doctrine of the Trinity

Augustine of Hippo was one of the leading thinkers of the western world. He spent 19 years studying this subject – so if you are feeling a bit overwhelmed in 60 minutes – not to worry! He published a work titled “On the Holy Trinity” — It has held up for 1,500 years!

TODAY – All Christians believe in the Trinity. Roman Catholics; Eastern Orthodox; Protestants. People say – *Well those Christians can't agree on anything.* We agree on this one! There is NO disagreement on that issue

THAT BEGS THE QUESTION – What are the major heresies that contradict the doctrine of the Trinity

1.) There is Polytheism – There is more than one God. One form of that is Tri-Theism – There are three gods. Polytheism includes Mormonism, which says that there are multiple gods and that Jesus is man who became a god – NOT God who became man. It is the same perversion and lie in the garden of Genesis where Satan said to our parents – *“You can become gods.”*

2.) There is Modalism – That heresy denies that God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit are three distinct persons. This heresy essentially says that there is one God who puts on three masks. In the OT he acts like the Father. In the Gospels He acts like Jesus. From the Book of Acts forward He acts like the Holy Spirit. But He is only playing one role at a time. This heresy runs into a problem with the text of **Matthew 3** at the Baptism of Jesus (The Father speaks – Jesus comes out of the water – The Holy Spirit descends). You can't play three parts at the same time. The primary proponent of this heresy today is the United Pentecostal Church. They deny the Trinity ---They refer to it as JESUS ONLY. There is no Father, Son and Spirit – there is JESUS ONLY who plays the part of the Father and the Spirit.

3.) There are heresies that which deny that the Father, Son and Spirit are Equally God. Early on that was put forth by a guy named Arian who said that the Father is God but Jesus is not. TODAY that is the heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

SOME ASK – Why does this matter – These are OLD heresies. Well – They are NOT --- the Mormons the UPC and the JW's misrepresent God.

Many churchgoers today — many of your peers — perhaps many here tonight say: *Why do we have to go through all of this? Can't we just love*

one another? Can't we just serve one another? This sounds so doctrinal!

LISTEN! This night exists BECAUSE I love you! Because the leadership at Metro loves you. **But I have to go back to what I said earlier.** Every deep and passionate and profound longing that you have can ever be satisfied apart from the Trinity! We cannot separate LIFE from DOCTRINE. Paul told Timothy to keep a close watch over himself and his doctrine (**1 Tim 4:16**).

There is NO LIFE apart from connection to the Trinity. We don't know live apart from the Trinity.

Which brings us to this – REAL LIFE is Trinitarian.

When my sins are forgiven – the Holy Spirit comes to live within me bringing me into fellowship with God. ALL of my life is now TRINITARIAN! All of my worship — all of my prayer — all of my ministry — is BY the Spirit – THROUGH the Son – TO the Father. THAT is all of life. There is a POWER source — God the Holy Spirit living within me — enabling me to live THROUGH the Son TO the Father! There is a LOVE source — the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at TRINITARIAN LIFE

TRINITARIAN LIFE IS LOVING

Some people say – We don't NEED doctrine – we just need to love! Listen – Unless you know WHO love is – WHAT love is – WHERE love comes from – HOW are you going to go out and love. There is no shortage of guys who are sleeping with their girlfriend and they are calling it love. That is not Trinitarian love. Trinitarian love is for the cherishing and serving of the other – not using. The Trinity loves perfectly and fully.

TRINITARIAN LIFE IS EXPRESSED IN COMMUNITY

We are going to get to this in depth in one our 4th study. When God made the world he saw that there was ONE thing that was NOT good! It was not good for man to be alone LONELINESS — ISOLATION — is not what God

intends. Relationship — community — friendship — THAT is what God intends. WHY? Because that is what God IS. The Trinity is a loving, relational community!

Trinitarian life is TOGETHER – as the Father, Son and Spirit are one.

TRINITARIAN LIFE IS TRANSPARENT

The Father Son and Spirit have no secrets. They have hidden nothing! Trinitarian life has no duplicity. It is not being one thing with one group and another thing with the next group. That means that we will be open and honest about our sins and failures – hopes and aspirations.

The doctrine of the Trinity has so much practical application!

TRINITARIAN LIFE IS HUMBLE

There was never a day when Jesus was jealous of the glory that the father received (*They all went away glorifying God*). **There never is a day** when the Name of Jesus is preached and exalted that the Spirit is jealous or covets that glory. The Father, Son and Spirit live to serve and exalt one another. That is why Jesus could say – *Not My will, but Your will be done!*

TRINITARIAN LIFE is HUMBLE. It is about the glory of God and the good of others. THAT is why Jesus said – *When you lose your life – That is when you find it.*

TRINITARIAN LIFE IS SUBMISSIVE

Again – we will get into this in depth in one of the upcoming studies. If you are defiant you are not Trinitarian – you are Satanic. It was Satan who came to our parents and said — *You don't have to submit to God. You're pretty smart and I think you should do what you want to do – not what God wants you to do.* THAT is Satanic!

A lot of churchgoers are living Satanic lives – Not submitted to your parents – not submitted to godly authority. *I can't trust anyone other than me – I*

can't follow anyone other than me --- because I don't believe that anyone is better than me. THAT is not Trinitarian – It is demonic. Jesus did not have that attitude. He went where the Father directed — Said what the father gave Him to say — Did what the Father wanted done — and He did it gladly!

LASTLY – TRINITARIAN LIFE IS HAPPY

Within the Trinity there is matchless and limitless joy? WHY? Because there is NO sin – NO jealousy – NO lying – NO hiding – NO blaming --- There is just LOVE. Perfect love — Perfect Unity — Perfect communication — Perfect connection.

In and of Himself (what theologians call the IMMIDENT TRINITY) God is the happiest being that ever existed. Without a doubt our sin does grieve God — and because of that it should grieve us. But in great love and in great joy, the Trinity decided to save us. And the Father decided to send the Son. And the Son agreed to come and live and die and rise. And the Spirit was sent to be present with us and to do a work in us and to do a work through us.

We have the opportunity to repent and believe this glorious good news — and should we do that we will enjoy a truly Trinitarian life that flows from all that the Trinity is and does.

Metro exists to bring you into relationship with the Trinity and to participate in Trinitarian life. Metro is a gathering of men and women who because of the cross of Jesus can enjoy life derived from a living relationship with the TRINITY!

REFERENCE MATERIALS

The Apostles' Creed

The basic creed of Reformed churches, as most familiarly known, is called the Apostles' Creed. It

has received this title because of its great antiquity; it dates from very early times in the Church, a half century or so from the last writings of the New Testament.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell. [See J.I Packer below]

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The following is taken from J.I. Packer “Affirming the Apostles Creed;

Published by Crossway Books, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

The Creed’s opening words, “I believe in God,” render a Greek phrase coined by the writers of the New Testament, meaning literally: “I *am believing into* God.” That is to say, over and above believing certain truths *about* God, I am living in a relation of commitment *to* God in trust and union. When I say “I believe in God,” I am professing my conviction that God has invited me to this commitment and declaring that I have accepted his invitation.

The word *faith*, which is English for a Greek noun (*pistis*) formed from the verb in the phrase “believe into” (*pisteuo*), gets the idea of trustful commitment and reliance better than *belief* does.

Whereas *belief* suggests bare opinion, *faith*, whether in a car, a patent medicine, a protégé, a doctor, a marriage partner, or what have you, is a

matter of treating the person or thing as trustworthy and committing yourself accordingly.

In North America, ever since the days of the Pilgrim Fathers, a general idea of what constituted Christian belief had been warp and woof in North American culture. Just as sugar stirred into coffee is present in solution, so Christianity was continuously present in solution in North American culture right up to the twentieth century. Then, for a number of reasons, Christianity and the Bible were eliminated from public schools and universities, family prayer and Bible reading at home closed down almost everywhere, a consciously post-Christian and indeed anti-Christian outlook established itself among thought leaders, and the gospel message had to fight for entry into the minds of white people under fifty, just as it had to do in the face of the paganism of the Roman Empire in the apostolic and post-apostolic age. In such a milieu, a truncated version of the gospel message, presenting Christ the Redeemer apart from God the Creator, and remission of sins apart from personal regeneration, and individual salvation apart from life and worship in the church, and the hope of heaven apart from the pilgrim path of holiness—which is what in practice the ABC approach does—becomes a misrepresentation, one that sows the seed of many pastoral problems down the road. Against a background of general acquaintance with, and acceptance of, the Christian outlook, periodic highlighting of a few truths to galvanize response might not in itself be a bad idea; but when we reach the point where the Creed no longer looks or sounds to Christian people like a declaration of the gospel, there is need, I believe, for some whistle-blowing and reassessment of what goes on.

For in fact the Creed itself was born as an instrument of evangelism—first, as a summary syllabus for catechetical teaching of the faith to non-Jewish inquirers, and then as a declaration of personal faith for converts to use at the time of their baptism. Jewish converts in the days of the book of Acts, for whom the issue was simply acknowledging Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah, were baptized in his name immediately on professing faith and brought straight into the fellowship of the church, but the initial discipling of pagan Gentiles required much more than that. So the catechumenate came into being. It seems that every congregation of any size in the second and third centuries had its ongoing instructional classes for teaching Christianity to those who wished to learn it. The course usually

lasted three years and always climaxed with confession of faith and solemn baptism on Easter Eve, followed by first Eucharist on Easter Day. And the confession was made in the words of the Creed.

Footnote on “Descended into hell” — taken from “Affirming the Apostles Creed” —

Though this clause did not establish itself in the Creed until the fourth century and is therefore not used by some churches, what it says is of very great importance, as we can now see..... What the Creed means, however, is that Jesus entered, not Gehenna, but Hades—that is, that he really died, and that it was from a genuine death, not a simulated one, that he rose. Perhaps it should be said (though one shrinks from laboring something so obvious) that “descended” does not simply that the way from Palestine to Hades is down into the ground, any more than “rose” implies that Jesus returned to surface level up the equivalent of a mine shaft! The language of descent is used because Hades, being the place of the disembodied, is lower in worth and dignity than is life on earth, where body and soul are together and humanity is in that sense whole.

For Further Study

[The Westminster Confession of Faith](#) (1647) summarizes the doctrine by saying “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.”

Wayne Grudem defines the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God” (Grudem, [Systematic Theology](#), p. 226).

Bruce Ware provides another helpful definition: “The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God’s whole and undivided essence belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct Persons of the Godhead.” (Ware, [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit](#), p. 41).

Louis Berkhof explained the doctrine of the Trinity under these headings: There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence. In this one Divine Being

there are three Persons or individual subsistences: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons. The subsistence and operation of the three persons in the divine Being is marked by a certain definite order. There are certain personal attributes by which the three persons are distinguished. The Church confesses the Trinity to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man. (Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 87–89)

The Trinity by Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall (163 pages) is a helpful overview of the history of the Trinity in church council, creeds, and theologians.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by Bruce Ware (176 pages) is a solid basic introduction to the Trinity and also a very practical examination of how it sets the pattern for human relationships including marriage.

The Forgotten Trinity by James White (224 pages) is a solid introduction to the doctrine and history of the Trinity.

Making Sense of the Trinity by Millard J. Erickson (112 pages) is a good introduction and overview of the Trinity.

“*The Biblical Basis of the Doctrine of the Trinity*” from Christian Research Institute

“*Tampering With the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to His Father?*” by Bruce Ware

“*The Trinity, the Definition of Chalcedon, and Oneness Theology*” by James White

“*The Nature of God – The Tri-Unity of God*” by James White