

## Understanding The Trinity

Tony

### Scriptures:

John 5:19

John 14:9-11

John 10:38

John 17

Almost all Christians would say they believe in the Trinity and many traditional churches celebrate Trinity Sunday which falls a week after Pentecost each year. However, over my lifetime I've observed that few church leaders look forward enthusiastically to preaching about the Trinity, and very few congregants leave church really inspired following the service. It is not an easy topic for a sermon since it is difficult for our finite human minds to fully comprehend or explain how it is possible for God to be three Persons in one, and one in three.

Growing up in Sunday School, I remember my teachers finding useful analogies to help us to understand. One analogy they used was water, (H<sub>2</sub>O) which can exist as steam, water and ice, yet is always H<sub>2</sub>O. The problem is that the same water cannot exist as Ice, Water and Steam at the same time.

Clover leaves are made of three parts whilst still being one leaf and they can do this at the same time, but they cannot exist as individual leaves. If torn off the stem they are severed for ever!

We might say that the Trinity is made up of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three ways of looking at one God.

We see God as Father, Creator and Sustainer

We see Jesus as Saviour, because He hung on the cross to pay the price of our sin. Teacher, because He spoke with greater authority than any of His contemporaries.

We also see Him as Healer, Miracle Worker and the one who is able to forgive sin.

We see Holy Spirit, as the one whom Jesus promised to send to empower the frightened disciples and turn them into powerful evangelists and leaders of the new church. Peter, who had denied knowing Jesus three times became Peter who stepped forward with confidence and great anointing on the day of Pentecost preaching a sermon that brought three thousand of his hearers to faith and salvation in Jesus.

The word Trinity, doesn't appear in the bible although we find all the ministries of the Trinity at work within its pages from Genesis to Revelation. It was Tertullian who, in 200AD, first used the Latin word "Trinitas" to describe God, and the Latin word "Persona" to describe the three persons of God.

What we can more accurately say of the Trinity is that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are perfectly united in purpose and action. They are not three gods, each with their own agenda, but one God and one plan unitedly acting together in love

Whilst researching the Trinity I came across a word that was introduced by Theologians way back in history. That word is Perichoresis (derived from the

Greek word perikhōrēsis) and it means 'a mutual indwelling of the Persons of the Godhead.'

We see the working of this most clearly through words of Jesus in John's gospel:-

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner" (John 5:19)

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, "Show us the Father?"..." (John 14:9-11)

"...the Father is in Me, and I in Him." (John 10:38)

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name; He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)

**PRAYER:** Triune God, we thank You that You teach us by example to live in unity with you and with one another. We thank You that You are our Abba, Saviour and Helper. We pray that our lives will individually and collectively will bring Glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

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For those who are interested, here is some further reading and teaching about the Trinity.

In Bread of Life devotions 2020 I wrote an article about 'Holy Spirit' which appeared on page 75, and also an article about 'Jesus, the God Man' which appears on page 104. Both may help as you read about the Trinity.

For those with internet access there are two Lectures by the late David Pawson about understanding the Trinity on Youtube. These are enthralling and very clear teaching.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Rnp9eGu-kg>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AHLMI-CsQ4>