

God is Triune

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Date: 04 July 2021

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction into our lives. Father, your Son took on flesh, becoming fully human while remaining fully God.

He lived amongst us, and he died on the cross, and he died as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And then he rose, Father, from the dead, triumphing over sin and over death and over hell itself.

And Father, we know that he did this not just to save us, but to reveal you. So Father, help us not to treat with contempt that which your Son did at a great cost to himself.

So Father, we ask that you help us to know you, to love you, to know about you, to trust you, to know, Father, that there is but one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God but three persons, that you desire us to know this for our great good and for our salvation.

So Father, do a wonderful work in our lives this morning, and we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated.

[1 : 09] Thank you. So, eventually, when I talk to people, they find out I'm a Christian, and we end up getting into maybe, you know, often when they find out I'm a Christian, nothing happens at all.

They just, oh yeah, you're a Christian. It's the same thing as, I don't know, you like the Ottawa Senators, and it just, excuse me, the conversation just moves on. But sometimes, at some point in other words, they'll get into a bit of a conversation with me about some of the problems they have with the Christian idea of God.

And the most common problem they have with the Christian idea of God or the Christian teaching of God is, of course, the problem of evil. How is it that there could be a God who's all-powerful and all-loving and there still be evil?

The other thing which they often will bring up is the whole doctrine of the Trinity, that the Trinity is, well, there's a variety of problems. I'm not going to look at the problem of evil today. I probably will talk about it when we either talk later on about God being all-powerful or God being love, because those are some of the sermons that we'll be doing over the next few weeks.

But we will talk this morning about the idea that God is three persons but one God. And people will tell me, George, this is a complicated idea.

[2 : 26] It's illogical. It's needless. It's confusing. One plus one plus one never adds up to one. It just doesn't make any sense.

Why don't you make the idea a little bit simpler? It just sounds, George, as if it's either the type of thing that maybe, you know, Constantine and the church hierarchy were doing some type of a power play, so they came up with this idea for political reasons.

You know, either that or it's, you know, all these crazed, sex-starved monks coming up with crazy types of ideas. And now you guys just continue to believe it. It makes no sense. You should make it simpler.

And there's a variety of other things like this, so that it might be that it's, in fact, an offense to God to say that any mere human being, this would be what many of our Muslim friends, for instance, or Jewish friends would say to us, that it's a profound offense and blasphemous, in fact, to actually even think that any human being could be God or would even claim to be God.

So why is it that Christians believe this? Well, just very, very simply, it has nothing to do with Constantine. It has nothing to do with politics in the Roman Empire.

[3 : 38] It has nothing to do with the power of the church. It has nothing to do with sex-crazed monks, nor does it have anything to do with just people wanting to be more complicated philosophers.

The entire reason we believe in the Trinity is because of Jesus. Very, very simply, very, very plainly, it all comes back to Jesus. And, in fact, actually, once you understand that it's because of Jesus that we had to put the Christians trying to understand, just being really attentive to who he is and what he said and what he did, that we come up with these other creeds and stuff that try to put some extra language around it.

It's all just really everything in the doctrine of the Trinity, in a sense, is tethered to Jesus, is anchored by Jesus, and grows out of what Jesus taught.

So what I'd like to do, I'm going to do two sort of types of things this morning. Hopefully, I have enough time to do both of them. First of all, I want to sort of just give you three simple little things about Jesus that, in effect, if you get that, there'd only be one other one that if we did another sermon on the Incarnation, you'd add a fourth one, which I'll tell you after I've done the third one. But basically, everything about the thinking of the Trinity comes out of these three simple things that Jesus taught and did. And then the second part is we'll just reflect a little bit about why, actually, rather than being illogical, irrational, and overly complicated, it's actually profoundly good news for every one of us and worthy of meditation.

[5 : 12] So what's the first thing? The first one thing actually isn't very complicated or controversial. Jesus taught that there is only one God. Jesus taught that there is only one God.

Now, we're going to look, if you turn in your Bibles, we're going to be looking at a lot of Bible verses this morning. And actually, one of the things that we're going to do is this. All of the texts, with sort of one exception at the end, and then another little exception that you'll see in a moment, I'm going to take all of my examples just from the Gospel of Mark.

In a sense, what I'm going to do is, not that I'm trying to fight anybody, but I'm going to tie, in a sense, as Christians, we're going to tie both of our hands behind our back to defend this doctrine. And why? Because many of our friends, there are many of our friends who completely and utterly would discount the Gospel of John. They would say that the Gospel of John was written way too late, and so it's obviously just an invention by people who no longer knew Jesus.

Now, I actually subscribe to a bit of a minority position among scholars. I think there's really very good reasons to believe that every single thing in the New Testament was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, and so that everything in the New Testament was not far too late for there to be still many eyewitnesses around.

[6 : 35] But we're going to take that. We won't talk about John. And then there's many other people who say that, in fact, there was Jesus' teaching, and then it very quickly got confused and perverted.

And the person who perverted the teaching of Jesus was this man by the name of Paul. And so that if you could go back in time before Paul, you'd see that Jesus didn't teach these types of things because Paul confused everything.

And by the same type of token, they'd say you can't look at Jude, you can't look at James, you can't look at Hebrews, you can't look at either of the epistles by Peter. And so what that leaves is that they'll sort of credit, often some of our credits, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, but especially Mark, because just about everybody, actually up until about 200 years ago, most people thought Matthew was the first Gospel that was written.

But for the last 200 years, even the most skeptical scholars probably think that the Gospel of Mark was the very, very first biography of Jesus that was written, the very, very earliest. And it's the briefest.

So what we're going to do is we're just going to look at Mark. We're going to tie not only both of our hands behind our back, we're going to tie up one foot so that we have to hop around and try to defend it. If you're right-footed, on your left foot.

[7 : 48] If you're left-footed, on your right foot. And that's what we're going to do. We're just going to look at Mark just to see, in fact, if these three key ideas that the Trinity grows out of can be found in the Gospel of Mark.

The first, the earliest eyewitness testimony to what Jesus said and what he taught. So the first idea is that Jesus taught that there's only one God.

Well, if you look at Mark chapter 12, verses 28 to 34, we'll see Jesus teach this very clearly. We'll just look at one verse because it's not a controversial text, but I want you to see it.

And it goes like this. And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another. That's Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees. And seeing that Jesus answered them well, he

asked Jesus, which commandment is the most important of all?

Which is the most important commandment? And then Jesus answered. And what he's about to answer, our Jewish friends will tell us, that he answers with the Shema. I don't know if I pronounced it correctly. That's close enough.

[8 : 49] The Shema. And it is the central piece of Jewish thought about God. It is the central, it is like their creed that there's only one God. And Jesus said it's the most important commandment.

Listen to what he says. The most important is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

And then Jesus adds a second one, saying the second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said to him, You're right, teacher. You have truly said that he is one and that there is no other beside him.

And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding, with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is much more than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices. So Jesus very clearly accepted the Jewish creed that there is only one God.

Now, the second thing is that Jesus taught and modeled that, but just by the way here, you're going to now notice some differences between how I summarize my point and what's on the screen.

[9 : 57] And the reason is, is that one of the ways I do my sermons when there's an 8 and 10 o'clock is I create an email that gives the points to people. And then to help refresh myself, I write the points down by hand in my book.

It's a way to help me remember the flow of the talk. I forgot my phone at home, so I have no email. So I'm using an earlier version of my points, but my words will be very similar to the words which are up there.

But here's the second one. That Jesus taught that he is different from the Father. Or another way to put it, is that the Father and Jesus are not the same. That's what Jesus taught, and he modeled it many, many, many times.

I'm just going to give you two particular examples. So if you look at Mark chapter 14, verses 32 to 36, this is a very poignant scene.

Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he knows that he's going to be captured very soon by soldiers, and he knows that he's going to be convicted falsely, and he knows he's going to die on the cross, and he knows all of these things.

[11 : 04] And so, you know, here this is actually a really important type of testimony because it captures Jesus at his most vulnerable and his most fragile, and see how he talks. And they went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray.

And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.

And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. Here, listen to this. 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. Very clearly, he's talking to his father, Abba. And it's a very different...

He's obviously talking to a different person. He's not saying he's the same as the father. This becomes also very clear if you just sort of turn your page in most of your Bibles and look at Mark chapter 15, verses 33 to 34.

[12 : 13] And now we see Jesus hanging on the cross, and he's dying. And here's what he says.

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, Lema sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Very clearly, he's talking to God. He's not talking to himself. He's saying that God has forsaken him. He's making a very clear distinction between him and God. So here's how we've seen so far.

Jesus teaches very clearly that there is only one God. And he teaches very clearly that he is not the Father, that the Father and him are different. But here now, there's a third pillar, the third anchor point, so to speak, of the doctrine, out of which, which tethers the doctrine, of which the doctrine of the Trinity grows out of, is that Jesus taught that he is God, the Son of God.

That Jesus taught that he is God, the Son of God. Now, at this point in time, often when I say this to people, they go, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, time out.

And many people who might not know very much about the Bible know this one thing, especially when it comes to this. They'll say, but didn't Jesus say that the Father is greater than him? Therefore, he can't be God.

[13:44] Didn't Jesus say that? Now, it's very interesting because often the very same people who will tell me you can't trust the Gospel of John or et cetera, et cetera, what they actually do is they quote John to me.

So if they quote John to you, something like that, you'll say, well, okay, whoa, whoa, whoa, that's a good point. Let's look at it. But actually, what they've actually just allowed you to tell them is dynamite that blows up their position.

If you turn in your Bibles to John chapter 14, John chapter 14, verses 28 to 33, we'll see where Jesus says this.

And actually, if you go back, I mean, John's Gospel is just filled with teaching about Jesus being God. And John chapter 14 and 15 and 16 and 17, this is Jesus speaking in the upper room to his disciples.

Once again, he knows that he's going to be captured that evening. He knows he's going to die on the cross the next day. And so it's a very intimate final words that Jesus has with his disciples.

[14:47] But listen to what it says here. You heard me say to you, I am going away and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father for the Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it takes place so that it was take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Rise, let us go from here. Now, here's the dynamite in the text. In fact, you might want to talk, put it up on the screen, is that Jesus is teaching here that he and the Father have the same nature.

Now, this is not often seen by us, but I, many of you know, if you don't know, I'm about to tell you, I have nine children. I can only father human beings.

I didn't father nine children, three puppy dogs, two cats, and five guppies. A member of our congregation, a couple in our congregation, Laurie and Andrea, just this week gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

[16:01] Woo-hoo! And we all knew that whatever was going to come out of Andrea's womb was going to be human because humans beget humans.

Cats, cats, dogs, dogs, guppies, guppies. That's just the way it is. Whatever I beget is going to be of the same nature of me. So actually, all of those times in the New Testament where God calls, like those earlier things, Abba, Father, where he's talking to his father, he's making a claim that God and him have the same nature.

Now, usually those objecting to this, at this point in time, they don't quite know what to say because they thought they had the mic drop moment. They made their point, they drop it, and we move on.

But this is the first of several pieces of evidence that Jesus, in fact, this is from John, but other people usually bring this up. I don't have to bring it up myself. But let's go back to Mark. So the first part of three is that Jesus taught that he and the Father have the same nature.

The next one is that Jesus acted as only God can act with demons and sickness. go back to the Gospel of Mark and we'll see just an example of each of them that are very, very simple.

[17:15] Mark 1, verses 25 to 26. There's a person with a demon, but Jesus rebuked him saying, be silent and come out of him.

And the unclean spirit, the demon, convulsing the man and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. And if you just sort of look down to Mark chapter 1, verses 41 to 42, we'll see here Jesus dealing with somebody who is sick, who has leprosy.

Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will be clean. He's been asked to heal him. I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him and he was made clean.

Now once again, this doesn't seem like much, but it's something that only God can do. You and I have all prayed that somebody would be healed. And what we in a sense are expecting is that I say, Father or Jesus, please heal this person.

And what we're hoping is that in a sense the Father, Jesus hears it and Jesus doesn't, the Father doesn't say, okay, well I'm going to get the right medicine or I'm going to ask somebody else to do it.

No, what does the Father do?

[18:20] He says, demon be gone. He says, be healed. So you see here, Jesus doesn't pray. He acts exactly like God, but he doesn't sort of play act like God.

He acts like God and what only God can do happens. The demon is gone. The leprosy is gone by a simple act of Jesus' will.

Then we also see that Jesus forgives sin, but only God can forgive sin. It's a bit of a longer text, but if you look at Mark 2, verses 1 to 12, we see this.

Jesus forgives sin, but only God can forgive sin. Here's how the text goes. Actually, if we skip down clear to verse 5. So basically, there's a, you know, they're all in a room hearing Jesus teach.

They want to bring, their friends want to bring this man to be healed. They can't get through, so they make a hole in the roof. They drop the man through. And here we take it up, the story at verse 5.

And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven.

[19:29] Son, your sins are forgiven. Jesus has never met this man before. This young man has done nothing against Jesus. Only one person can only, I can't come up and say, I forgive you of all your sins.

You'd go, what? You can't forgive? That's just, that's what crazy people say. You know, that's what the people who mutter to themselves and wear the same clothes for five weeks in a row and wander the streets of downtown Ottawa, they say things like that.

Not somebody like this. You can't just say, I forgive your sins. I might be able to forgive Chris if he does something to me. Daniel might be able to forgive me if I do something to Daniel.

But no human being can just get up and forgive the sins of another person. That's only something God can do. And that's what Jesus says here. Look at it again, verse 6, 5, Son, your sins are forgiven.

Now some of the scribes, verse 6, were sitting there questioning their hearts. Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone? And immediately, Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they questioned within themselves, said to them, Why do you question these things in your heart?

[20:37] Which is easier to say to the paralytic, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man, that is Jesus, has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He said to the paralytic, I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home. And the young man rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We have never seen anything like this.

Now, obviously, there's no logical connection between being able to heal somebody and forgive sin. but there's a very profound spiritual, theological, and philosophical connection to it.

Because once again, we see that Jesus does what only God can do. Only God can say, Paralysis, be gone. Health, replace what was causing the paralysis.

I bestow it. Only God can do that. And in fact, you can't actually necessarily tell whether or not God has forgiven your sins. That's in a sense an invisible thing. But this is a very visible thing and it's obviously a very, very good test that it vindicates and validates what Jesus says.

[21:51] I mean, at the end of the day, the reason that there are any Christians in the world is because the death of Jesus upon the cross in fulfillment of centuries of prophecies, in fulfillment of centuries of preparation in terms of sacrifices and topology and prophecies and poetry and wisdom and all of this and also in the context of Jesus saying that he's going to die in a particular way and he's going to rise on the third day and Jesus' death upon his cross and his resurrection, the resurrection vindicates what Jesus says.

It vindicates who he is. It vindicates his teaching. And this, in a sense, is just giving us a bit of a foretaste that God, the Son of God, Jesus is going to do something to vindicate all of our trust in his words and in his work.

And what we clearly see here is that Jesus claims to be able to forgive sins, something that only God can do. And fourthly, God instituted the Sabbath and its rules.

Very clear. You read the Old Testament, what our Jewish friends call the Torah or the Tanakh. God creates the Sabbath, God institutes it, God sets the rules.

What does Jesus do? He says he is the Lord of the Sabbath and can change the rules. Only God can do that. Only God. Look at it, it's Mark chapter 4 verses 27 to 28.

[23 : 20] Mark chapter 4 verses 27 to 28. Maybe I have the wrong text which would just be very, very, very... Mark 2, sorry, I can't read my own writing.

Mark chapter 2 verses 27 to 28. And it goes like this. And he said to them, they're having a debate about what Jesus' disciples were doing, and Jesus said to them, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

So the Son of Man, referring to himself, is Lord, even of the Sabbath. He takes the prerogative of God in terms of the Sabbath.

Jesus acted like only God can act when he stilled the storm. Jesus acted like only God can act when he stilled the storm. Look at Mark chapter 4 verses 39 to 41.

They're in a storm with the disciples. It's a terrible, terrible storm. They think they're all going to die. And in verse 39, and he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still.

[24 : 24] And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And he said to them, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Only God can speak to the wind and tell it to stop and it stops. To take the waves, even if all the wind and all the current all of a sudden was to die, those of you who've been on water know that it takes a long time for the waves to be still.

Only God can actually tell the wind to stop and the waves to stop and for there to be calm. Jesus didn't pray that God would do it, he merely said it and it happened.

Only God can do that. Jesus claimed that he would rule from God's throne. Jesus claimed that he would rule from God's throne.

Mark chapter 14 verses 61 to 64. Mark 14 verses 61 to 64. Now this is also very significant because he also does, first of all, he's doing this while he's under oath and he's on trial for his life and he's under oath and hear how he responds.

[25 : 47] So they say to him, verse 61, but he remained silent and made no answer. Again, the high priest said, are you the Christ, the son of the blessed? Because they were devout Jews, they're not going to say the divine name, they're actually saying in a sense, are you the son of Yahweh?

And back then, our culture is completely and utterly confused about what it means to be a human being. And that's a whole other sermon that ultimately goes back for the arguments in favor of abortion that ultimately make us all now very confused about what a human being is or what a human being isn't, what a person is and what a person isn't.

Jewish people weren't, they understood that if he was the son of the blessed one, he is God. And they asked him that directly. And Jesus said, and here, if you go back to the book of Exodus, in chapter three, where God reveals himself, he reveals himself as I am.

And if you read the Greek version of the Hebrew text, you see that Jesus says that he is, I am. He says, I am God to them in question as to whether he is the son of the blessed one.

He says, I am. And then to emphasize that he said, and you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds on high of heaven. And here, it doesn't sort of mean like, you know, right now, Daniel's, you guys are all, you know, you folks over here are sitting at my right, but I'm obviously, no, no, no, no.

[27 : 21] The picture is of a co-regent of a very, very big throne. And that in fact that there's God on a throne and right on the throne with him at his right hand is Jesus. So he pronounces the divine name.

He says, I am, I am God. And he says, I'm actually, you're going to see me. I will be sitting on God's throne with God. And how do they respond?

And the high priest tore his garments and said, what further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. Jesus claimed that he was God, that he would rule from God's throne. And finally, and I'm going to leave Mark for the first time, look at the last text, Jesus accepted people's worship as he taught the Trinity.

Jesus accepted people's worship as he taught the Trinity. Look at Matthew chapter 28 verses 17 to 20. So I've gone away from Mark, but I've gone to another one that even skeptics will acknowledge.

[28 : 32] In fact, actually up until about the year 1800, this was viewed as the earliest text. But around the 1800s it started to move towards being Mark. And here's what it is. It's after the

resurrection of Jesus.

He's died. He's risen from the dead. Verse 17, And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Now just sort of pause here about this. It's an accurate translation, but it's a little bit misleading.

Now, I've been speaking for 27 minutes. I don't know how many have I put to sleep. I'm not asking for a test, but I'm sure I've put some of you to sleep. I don't know how many of you were worshipping. Why? Because in a sense, whatever worshipping you're doing is going on behind your eyeballs and in your heart.

But that's not what he's referring to because then how would he know whether anybody's worshipping him? What they mean is, they fall on their face prostrate. They do FaceTime in front of Jesus.

That's what the word worship here means. It's not only bowing low, but actually on the ground. They're, think, on the ground. And the doubted is that there's some of them there, they're not, like, should it be like this?

[29 : 44] Should I stand? Like, that's the doubting. Like, what do you do? Do you go full face worship? So that's what they're seeing. If you were there with a time machine, you went back in time with a time machine, you'd see Jesus appear to all of these disciples after he's risen from the dead.

bang, huge number of them right on their face worshipping him. And Jesus doesn't rebuke them. You go look at the book of Acts. There's a time in the book of Acts where Paul and Barnabas, Paul performs a mighty miracle, and all of a sudden in the local dialect, they said, good grief, the gods have come down and they go and they get their pagan priest and they come and want to start offering sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas.

And Paul and Barnabas run and say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You have to leave all these idols. I'm not God. Don't worship me. But here Jesus accepts it. And then listen to what he does in the context of accepting worship.

Verse 18, And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them.

Here's the key. In the name, singular. Not in the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but in the name, singular.

[31 : 02] And for Jewish and Christian thought, the name represents identity. It represents, in a sense, the whole person, the whole nature and person of God. And so, in a sense, when he says, in the name, singular, of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we see here in microcosm the building blocks of all of the creeds on the doctrine of the Trinity.

There is but one God who exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All in the context of receiving worship, the claim of all authority in heaven and earth being given to him.

And then you continue on, verse 20, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you as if he is God. And then this, and behold, I am with you always to the ends of the age.

Only God can be omnipresent. Why do Christians believe in the Trinity? It's not because of sexed, crazed, incel-type monks or Constantine having a power play.

It's all because of Jesus. And if you just add a fourth thing that Jesus was fully human, if I was to do a fourth thing, which I don't have time for, and it just showed how he was tired, he cried, he slept, he had to eat, all those types of things, you'd have all of the building blocks of all of the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

[32 : 29] And the whole history of people who doubt it or try to go into heresy are all people who lose track of these things and can't account for Jesus.

And I've just used Mark. Didn't even go into Matthew, Luke, John, Paul, Hebrews. Just Mark. So here's the thing that's very, very important.

The doctrine is tethered to Jesus, it's anchored in Jesus, it grows from Jesus. It's really just merely trying to honor Jesus and what he taught.

And here's the thing with all of these teachings. What you cannot say after hearing this, in this argument, most people think it goes back to C.S. Lewis, but Lewis learned it from Athanasius 1,700 some odd years ago.

What you cannot say after hearing this is that Jesus was merely a prophet or a good man. Because we would all agree that if in fact Jesus knew that this was not true, then he's a liar.

[33 : 31] He's not a good man. He's a deceiver. He cannot be a prophet. He cannot be a good man. He cannot be a trustworthy teacher. He is a liar and a deceiver. And he deserves whatever punishment he gets.

I got a scamming phone message the other day claiming that I had to give information about my bank account and I text in the back, I hope you all go to jail. That was my response.

I hope you all go to jail. And you all think, way to go. I'm going to do that too. Like that's the thing to do. The other thing is, and we all, we come to downtown Ottawa, you go wandering around, you're going to see lots of crazy people who think that there are all sorts of crazy things, who hear from God, who are God.

So Jesus either thinks he's God and he isn't, and then he's a crazy man. And you know what? Nobody should worship a crazy man. A crazy man needs help.

Or he's a liar. The only other option is, and this is what Christians believe, is that it's all true, that he is in fact the Lord. That God himself has come into his creation to do what only God can do to make himself known and to redeem human beings.

[34 : 45] But some of you might say, George, that's still so complicated and all of that type of stuff. Like, you know, George, okay, those are all very interesting points and I can sort of see how it is that you Christians think this, but George, come on, good grief, compared to just some other religions that just very clearly teach that there's only one God or other types of religions that teach that all things are God.

I mean, those are just, they're simple, they're more plausible, they're obviously more likely to be true. Well, that's true.

They are vastly more plausible to be true. But here's the problem, and it's a very big problem. This, my wife and I, we married when we were 13 and so coming up in the fall we'll be married 40 years. That's how we managed to be our young age and still be married for such a long time. And if you, if you ask my wife if she really fully understands me, she'd say, no.

Some things I understand, but there's things about George that are just a mystery. Like, I just, I still haven't figured these things out about George. And, you know, we all know what it's like to try to even just understand another human being.

[36 : 09] Or actually even understanding ourselves. Like, very, very shallow people think they understand themselves. But once you actually get going, like, you realize there's just complexities in any human being that we don't really understand ourselves.

And I, and I'm, I've been living with myself for a long time. And I've been, you know, with, I've known Louise a long, long time and I, I still don't fully understand her. I can't get my mind completely around her.

The only way that I could get my mind completely around her is if I'm more than human. But you see, that's exactly the type of false step we're taking with God.

You see, if God is easy to understand, it means he can't be God. it means that he's less than a human being. We can have a pretty good understanding of a leaf.

Leaf is way less than a human being. Or a bug, way less than a human being. But we can't have a very good understanding of even a creature the same as us, a person. Only someone greater than a human could have the knowledge of a human the way we have the knowledge of a bug.

[37 : 21] And so if we claim that we have that knowledge of God, you know what that's actually showing? It's showing that that understanding of God cannot possibly be true. I don't mean to offend, but it cannot possibly be true.

Your conception of God is of a being less than you, not greater, no matter how much you add worship to it. And out of all of the systems of philosophy, out of all of the systems of theology, out of all of the ideologies, and out of all of the religions, there is only one option that portrays God as something greater than our mind.

In fact, there's only one teacher, only one faith, that is even remotely in the correct direction that if there is a God, what that God must be like.

Now, of course, this doesn't prove the Christian conception of God is correct, but there's no other alternatives. alternatives. There are no other alternatives. Next week in the blog, I'll give you a suggestion of some books to help you understand the doctrine of the Trinity, but you can at least see that while this idea of plausibility is very plausible to us, hence its plausibility, it in fact is a witness against us that those other conceptions of God cannot possibly be true.

There has to be something about understanding a being who is infinitely greater than you, because if you think about it for a second, the difference between you and a leaf is a finite difference.

[38 : 55] The difference between you and a bug is a finite distance. The distance between you and God is an infinite distance. And so it is that there must be, that isn't that the doctrine of the Trinity is irrational, but it's actually opening up to the idea that God in fact is vastly greater than you, that it's as if you were in a subterranean cavern and they bring you into a cavern and all you have is your cell phone and you can't even use the flashlight thing, all you can do is turn it on and all you can do is get the tiniest little bit of an idea, but you just have a sense from that and from the sound that you are in a huge space.

And occasionally if you look, you see things that are wonderful and beautiful and you'd be filled with awe and filled with fear because you're in a tiny light in a huge space and that is exactly what it's like with us with God.

Our minds are tiny and God is vast and he reveals true truth to us even though it in a sense is far bigger than our minds. I need to draw this to a close, but this is really important good news.

The final point, only God can reveal himself and only God can provide the way to himself. If you think about it for a second, if you sit beside, after church you try to have a conversation with somebody and they refuse to even talk to you, even look at you, even answer any of your questions, you can't know them.

You need that other person to reveal something about themselves for you to know them. And so it is with God. Unless God reveals himself, we cannot know him. And at the same time, that only God, if there is this infinite God, the only way who can provide a way towards God, to God, has to be God himself.

[40 : 38] It can't come from a prophet or philosophy or technology or technique or spirituality. It has to come from God or it can't possibly be real. Only the infinite can provide a way for the finite to connect to the infinite.

And that's what we hear with Jesus about the gospel. And it's not just, I mean, here's the thing, I mean, things about this, which I've run out of time, but they're so precious.

Nothing grounds the dignity of human being more than the doctrine of the Trinity and this idea that God, the Son of God, took on flesh and lived amongst us. To understand that God himself could take into himself our human nature, that he would walk amongst us, gives us most profound dignity to every human being that we could meet.

It doesn't matter if they're from China or from Africa, from North America, it doesn't matter if they're from the far north, from the Middle East, that every God, the Son of God, took on flesh and walked amongst us and every human being then has this profound dignity as a result of the doctrine of the incarnation.

And that we see that God didn't just sort of reveal himself in a way that only smart people can understand or that only very poetic and subtle people can understand, but just as a young child gets a true sense of a human being, you can read even the youngest child stories about Jesus and they can start to understand and know him.

[42 : 10] And even the youngest child, in fact, young children have an easier time of understanding that God loved you so much that he came to seek you and find you and die on the cross to make you his child because he loves you and that is a story that even the simplest child can understand, but the most profound mystic intellectual poet, musician will never exhaust, but will also understand.

And God does not just sort of reveal himself in a way that he can stand back aloof, but he comes among us in the midst of our mess and he comes amongst us in the midst of our mess not to condemn us, but to die on the cross and to provide a way, the way, by which we could return to him. You know, there have been many people, and I'm not taking plot shots, this is a common thing about all over the world, but I'm sure there are many low-wage workers in North America and many small business owners in North America who wonder if high-paid bureaucrats and politicians effortlessly make decisions about lockdowns and throw them out of work and put their business out of business.

And they wonder if these people know what it's like to be a low-wage worker. Do they know what it's like to be a small business owner? And they have very good reasons to ask that question.

But only in the gospel do we know that God knows what it's like for you to be a human being. He is not a God aloof from your mess. He came in the midst of human mess.

[43 : 52] And he will come in the midst of your mess. He died bearing your mess for your mess so that you could be the adopted child of God when you put your faith in Christ.

He comes in to know us so that we might know God. Let's stand. Bow our heads in prayer.

Father, we confess before you that we just very casually think that our minds and our minds formed by our culture is the measure of all things.

And if you don't meet the criteria of our mind that somehow that's your problem, Father, we don't even recognize our profound pride and arrogance. And so, Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you, Father, that we have a chance to gather around your world and to be confronted about our pride and our arrogance. And we ask, Lord, that you would humble us, that you would humble us, that we would acknowledge that you, if you are God, if there really is one answer in our prayer, that you have to be vastly greater than us.

[45 : 08] You have to be one that our mind can't fully understand, that we can only get bits and glimpses that you give to us, that that has to be what is real. And, Father, we give you thanks and praise that you don't just merely give us pieces of information in the abstract, but that you came and walked amongst us, that you revealed yourself so that we would know you, that we would know that you have provided a way, even in the midst of our mess, that you will be our God, that you would be our Father, that Jesus would be our Savior, that the Holy Spirit would indwell us, that we would have a hope of heaven, a hope of glory, a hope of a future, that you have revealed yourself in such a way that we know that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, that you will never let us go, that you will never forsake us, that you will never mock us, that you will never shame us, that you will never deride us, that you only become our Savior to save us and to fit us from heaven, to do what we cannot do that only you can do.

Father, we ask that you would fill us with a great comfort and great confidence and trust in Jesus, and a great, great confidence that there is but one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.