

The World of the Trinity

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Date: 19 July 2020

Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 00] Well, glad to have you here once again, and let me open our time of hearing God's Word. Let me open with prayer, and then we'll dive into the world of the Trinity.

Father, we're grateful that we have your Word revealed to us, a special revelation of Scripture. We see evidence of you out in the created world.

We catch a glimpse of your divine power. We catch a glimpse of your glory. But you are more fully revealed in these pages of Scripture, and especially as in them we open up and we see your Son, Jesus Christ.

So today, God, I'm asking that we may come away with a fuller picture of who you are. What kind of God it is we are worshiping. And Lord, that we may come to honor and glorify you as the one true God.

Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, a heart to understand. Amen. Well, we have a three-week series ahead of us. And so what I'd like to do is start off this three-week series with this question.

[1 : 18] What's the most important personal relationship in the world to you? What's the most important personal relationship in the world to you?

What do you have in mind? Now, maybe you say, hey, I'm not a particularly religious person. I'm a family-oriented kind of person. So maybe you say that, hey, to me, the most important personal relationship in the world is it's the relationship between me and my parents or between myself and my spouse or between my children and I.

That's where real life is found for you. Or maybe, you know, you're kind of more of an individualist. And so you say, hey, to me, the most important personal relationship in the world is the relationship that I have with myself.

I want to be in touch with my inner desires, with my feelings, with my thoughts. That's where real life is found for me. Or maybe you're, you know, you're a Christian.

You grew up in church. You grew up on Sunday school. And you're like, aha, I know the right answer to this question. To me, the most important personal relationship in the world, it is my relationship with God.

[2 : 34] You know what? I've got Bible verses all lined up for you to hear. But this morning, I'm here to tell you all some good news.

And the good news is this. All of you are wrong. All of you are wrong. Isn't that great news? Don't we love being wrong? I know I do. The most important personal relationship in the world is actually something even better than what we've mentioned so far.

It is something far more life-giving than any of these relationships we ponder and that we treasure. There is a relationship that is more important than any of the ones I've mentioned.

And it's a relationship that's, it begins to be captured in a prayer that Jesus prays in John chapter 17. Because toward the end of his prayer, Jesus is praying for his disciples.

And he makes this request. And this request, it is utterly profound. He says this. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am.

[3 : 44] To see my glory that you have given me. Because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

You loved me before the foundation of the world. So here, we're seeing a personal relationship that is just far richer, far better, far more profound than any other relationship that there is.

Jesus is giving us a tiny glimpse into a relationship within God. A relationship within God. Maybe you've never really thought much about that before.

Maybe, you know, you're used to thinking about, hey, when I think about God, I think about the way he relates to us. What he does for us. How he thinks of us. And how, what we do for him. And how

we think of him.

But maybe you're not used to thinking about God relating to God. But what we're going to see over the next three weeks is that this relationship within God, it is the most important personal relationship there is.

[4 : 57] And in fact, it is the most important personal relationship that there is to you. If we understand this rightly, we understand this relationship rightly, we will be gloriously transformed by it as we come to know it.

If we understand it wrongly or merely academically, we will be warped or twisted by our foolish mindset. And so this is so critical, so important.

This relationship is what theologians have called the Trinity. The Trinity. How do we begin talking about God being a Trinity?

How do we introduce a triune God? A God who is three in one. Maybe we can begin by thinking about, hmm, who is God apart from the world that he created?

Who is God without reference to the world that he created? And it's kind of a funny way of thinking. It's a bit like thinking about, hey, what were your parents like before you were born?

[6 : 03] What were your parents like apart from any relationship with you? It's kind of a weird thing to think about, right? It's hard to picture how your parents related to one another without you around.

Without you being on their mind. And it's also difficult to think about what God is like without us in the picture. So let's ask that question.

What was God doing before he created the world? What was God doing before he created the world? What is God like? One of the greatest theologians in church history, he once tackled this question.

His name was, you can either pronounce it Augustine or Augustine. He comes from an African town called Hippo. So he's often known as Augustine of Hippo.

Not to be mixed up with many other aquatic African mammals. Augustine of Hippo, he wrote about this very subject. What was God doing before he created the world?

[7 : 05] And he wrote it in the year 397 AD in his famous work called His Confessions. And Augustine first offered, I guess there was maybe a witty response he'd heard, maybe from one of his buddies.

I don't know. But here's his sort of first crack. He says, Behold, I answer to him who asks, what was God doing before he made heaven and earth? I answer not as a certain person is reported to have done facetiously, avoiding the pressure of the question.

He was preparing hell, saith he, for those who pry into mysteries. Now, Augustine later on, after giving that, you know, little, you know, that little aside, he gives a more serious answer to this question.

And he writes these words as part of a prayer to God later on. And he writes, At no time, therefore, hadst thou not made anything, because thou hadst made time itself.

What he's saying is this. There isn't a time when God had not made anything. Why? Because the universe God made is composed of time and space.

[8 : 16] Outside of our universe, time isn't a thing. It's not a concept. There is no, quote unquote, before the world was made, because there's no time outside of that world.

And this completely accords with what we know from modern science. So the question doesn't really make sense. There is no before. Yet, you know, I think there's still a force to that question. We're still left wondering, what is God, what's he like out there in eternity? You know, a God who is transcendent, who is not limited to the time and space of our universe.

What is God doing before he created the world, before he created that universe of time and space? Well, we may not be able to pry into these mysteries on our own.

But Jesus, he helps us. And he helps us with these words from John chapter 17, verse 24. Those same words, 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.

[9 : 31] And it's that final phrase that is just jaw-dropping. You loved me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus is talking about something that is happening in eternity, some state outside of time and space. And what do we learn about God from this?

First, we see the way that Jesus addresses him. Him. He calls him Father. He starts by calling him Father. Apart from any relationship with you and me.

Apart from the world we see, the mountains and streams, the animals and trees. Apart from any of that, God is still a Father in eternity. This means that God is Father before he was ever creator.

God is Father before he was ever ruler. He functions as a Father in eternity. The theologian, Michael Reeves, he wrote a truly wonderful book that I'm going to quote a lot today.

[10:43] It's a book a few of you are familiar with. It's called *Delighting in the Trinity*, An Introduction to the Christian Faith. And in this book, *Delighting in the Trinity*, here's what Reeves reminds us.

If, before all things, God was eternally a Father, then this God is inherently an outgoing, life-giving God.

An outgoing, life-giving God. And we indeed find that this God produces life, even in eternity. God the Father, think of it almost like a lamp in a dark room.

From his very nature flows out brilliant light. And this radiance that proceeds from him is also a person. Whom we read about in Hebrews chapter 1.

In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. Whom he appointed the heir of all things.

Through whom also he created the world.

[11:48] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. However, this person, this radiance of the Father's glory, this exact imprint of his nature, this person is here called the Son.

Theologians describe this Son as eternally begotten by God the Father, always proceeding out from him. In eternity, he is God the Son. He is equal in nature, equal in status with his Father of the same divine being.

In the realm of our world, he has also become fully human. He has become not only 100% God, but also 100% human at the same time.

He has become this God-man, Jesus Christ. And so it's this Jesus who speaks to his Father. This Jesus who says to the Father, You loved me before the foundation of the world.

And so we know what God was doing before he created the world. We know who God is outside of time and space.

[13:06] Here is what Reeves reminds us. Before he ever created, before he ever ruled the world, before anything else, this God was a Father loving his Son.

This God was a Father loving his Son. But that's not all. This Father, he loves his Son in the most marvelous way possible.

What better way is that than to give someone else to his Son? You see, there's more than just two persons in this one eternal God.

There is more than just Father and Son. There is a third. And we catch a glimpse of this third person joining the Father and the Son at the moment when Jesus was baptized in Matthew chapter 3.

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.

[14:12] And behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. The Father speaks to his Son.

He reaffirms the love he has for his Son. The love he has had even from eternity. His Son is his beloved.

He is utterly delighted in his Son. He enjoys him. And so he opens the heavens and he sends to him the Spirit of God. This is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

The Father sends the Spirit to empower his Son. More than this, the Spirit communicates the innermost thoughts and desires of the Father to the Son, just as he does to us.

It's just as Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. For who knows a person's thoughts except the Spirit of that person, which is in him? So, also, no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

[15:21] And again he says, For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

If we have the Spirit, and every true Christian does have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, then we have the thoughts of God. The thoughts of God are the mind of Christ.

They're one and the same because they both share that same mindset through the Spirit. Their wills are one and the same. And so wherever the Spirit is present, he brings joy and harmony and activity and life to any relationship.

In Ephesians chapter 5, the Apostle Paul, he talks about, Oh, how good the Holy Spirit is for our relationships. You know, you and I, we sense there's problems, there's friction, there's difficulties in our relationships, and we look for things that can smooth them out, that can help us get along with one another.

One typical relationship enhancer that sort of sometimes helps people get along in awkward situations is alcohol, actually. I remember a college friend once telling me about inviting her co-worker to one of our Christian campus events, and her co-worker was just absolutely baffled that we were going to enjoy time together.

[16:44] We were going to throw a party and there wasn't going to be any alcohol. She couldn't conceive of the idea that it was possible to enjoy a party without the social lubricant of alcohol.

That just sort of takes the edge off the awkwardness and the anxiety. But the Spirit, he makes this possible. In the Trinity and in the larger family of God, Paul writes in Ephesians chapter 5, Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

This joyful fellowship, it's the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is oneness here. There is harmony within that oneness.

And so it is in eternity with the triune God. In eternity, there is only one being we can call God. The Lord our God, the Lord is one. In eternity, this God is three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[18:18] Each of these three persons is fully God. They're not one-third God. They're each fully God. And maybe you're thinking, how is that even possible?

One plus one plus one doesn't equal three. But it's true. In eternity, there's only one being we call God. In eternity, this God is three divine persons. Each of these three persons is fully God.

Should it surprise us that a being as transcendent, as awesome, as great as God is, is difficult for us to understand? We are humbled by this paradox.

But this is who God really is. In eternity, this God not only exists, but this God has relationship. A fundamentally relational God, a God who fundamentally loves.

He loves eternally, unchangingly. It is his nature. It is his nature. If this God had no relationship in eternity, if he were isolated and alone like the God of Islam, he would be a God fundamentally alone, fundamentally, without relationship, fundamentally not loving.

[19:34] But this God is. He is a trinity. Now imagine you have three persons in perfect unity, perfect harmony, perfect delight, perfect love.

There is just complete happiness here, complete satisfaction and joy in one another. Maybe you have been in relationships like that. You just don't want them to end.

And maybe you just, even just getting a taste of that, you think, why would I ever move on from that? Why would I ever try to add anything to that? And so it is here. Why would there ever be anything else?

Why would God create the world? Why would this God create the world? What does he need the world for? Now, if there were not one God, if instead we had many weaker deities, just like the, you know, ancient cultures, like the Romans, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Babylonians believed, then, you know, maybe it makes sense that they would create a world because those gods need stuff.

There are many ancient myths. They portray the gods as creating, they don't just create the world, but they create human beings. And you know why they create human beings? Because they need slaves. They need slaves to exploit.

[20:55] Slaves who can build them temples for their houses, who can sacrifice animals to them so that the gods can get fed. But the one true God is not like these greedy, needy gods.

Here's what the one true God tells us in Psalm 50. Every beast of the forest is mine. The cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills and all that moves in the field is mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell you. For the world and its fullness are mine. Here's the point. The one true God doesn't need you.

He doesn't need me to feed him anything. He already owns it all. The ancient idea of these, you know, these greedy, demanding, needy gods, it's all wrong.

So what about our modern ideas of God? Why do modern people think God might create the world?

Well, we might think, hey, maybe God created the world because he's got a different sort of need.

[22 : 06] Maybe he's got these deep psychological needs. Oh, this poor guy is lonely. Oh, he's in need of companionship. So he made you and me just to keep him company.

And here too, we have a God who is fundamentally needy. This is not the all-sufficient, fully loving, fully delighted trinity that we're beginning to know and enjoy.

Such a God is also greedy and needy for relationships. The true God already has perfect companionship among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The true God, the Trinity, does not in any way need you and me. And that's such good news for us because a God who creates people to meet his own felt need for community, He's a God who is focused on his own cravings.

Like you and me, he looks at other people and he's thinking, how can I get them to serve me and to give me what I'm longing for? And that kind of God can become self-absorbed, manipulative, even abusive toward us.

[23 : 21] But the triune God, he is not like that. Father, Son, and Spirit, they don't need to create anything or anyone. So then why would God create this world?

Why is there something when there could be nothing? If we slow down, if we listen, if we look carefully at the scripture, we begin to see it.

We begin to see why you and I exist, why the world was made, what we're even here for. Paul writes these words about God the Son.

He writes them in Colossians chapter one. For by him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him.

Now notice those two final words. All things were created for him. All things were created for the Son.

[24 : 28] And then look again at Hebrews chapter one. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, in whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

God the Father appointed his Son, the heir of all things. Everything that the Father created, he created for his Son to receive.

So why would God create the world? Because the world is a Father's gift to his beloved Son.

The world is a Father's gift to his beloved Son. That is why we are here. You and I, we are a Father's gift intended for his Son.

God the Father, his love, it overflows even beyond the relationship with the Trinity. It is like an ocean that cannot be contained.

[25 : 39] His love swells and abounds. He chose to surround his Son with creatures, not only angelic, but human, and the rest of all creation who can share his love for the Son.

Creatures who treasure the Son. Creatures who worship and delight in the Son. That is why Jesus prays in John chapter 17. 17. 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.

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.

Again, in Romans chapter 8, we are told this love, this fellowship with the Son, it is the joyful destiny of everyone who believes in the Son of God.

for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son in order that he, that's the Son, might be the firstborn among many brothers.

[27 : 15] Yes, God wanted his Son to be the foremost among many brothers. That's what we were created for. We will always remain human.

And yet, we're going to be conformed to the image of his Son. We're going to be like Jesus Christ in every way that a human being can possibly be. We were created to share this Trinitarian delight in

the Son, to enjoy the fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit, to see, to behold, to enjoy the glory of the Son, to enjoy him forever and ever.

That's what we were made for. And the Father created us to share his extravagant love for the Son. This week, I was reminded of this purpose for us.

I was reading the story of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, when she anoints Jesus with this insanely expensive jar of perfume. In John chapter 12, we read, Mary, therefore, took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. There was a man in that room who didn't delight in the Son, who didn't delight in Jesus Christ.

[28 : 46] Judas Iscariot, who would later betray him, he was horrified by the wastefulness of this act. But Jesus, he saw in what Mary did, he saw the overflowing, extravagant love of the Father in her kindness to him.

A pound of priceless ointment poured on him from head to toe, every last drop, wiping his feet with her own hair, the whole house just bursting with fragrance, overwhelming.

That's the kind of love that the Father has for his Son. That's the kind of love and worship the Father wants the world to show his Son.

He wants us to relate to his Son the way that Mary did because that's the way he relates to his Son. And there's more to the Father's love than this. There's even more than his longing to see his Son honored and loved and worshipped.

You see, not only did the Father intend this created world as a gift for his Son, but the Father invited the Son and the Spirit to join him together in creating the world that he had planned.

[30 : 09] In Genesis chapter 1, right at the beginning, when we read how the world was created, here are the opening words. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, let there be light and there was light. So yes, God created the heavens and the earth, but the Father did not work alone.

The Spirit of God was present there, ready to breathe life into the world that was being formed. And what about the Son? Well, we've already seen from Colossians chapter 1 that by him, by the Son, all things were created.

That all things were created through him. We've already seen from Hebrews chapter 1 that through the Son, God created the world. And just in case we missed it, we're told yet again that the Son created the world in John chapter 1.

[31 : 24] Here, in language that takes us back to the beginning, the Son is portrayed as the Word that the Father spoke into creation in order to make the world.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

So the same God who said, let there be light, He is the Father of a Son, the Son who is His Word, the radiance of God, proceeding from the Father, the light of men.

This Son is full of His Father's life, and He too bestows the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life. As they begin their work of creation together, as they began that together, it was the Father's pleasure to plan and purpose, to choose and command.

[32 : 33] And something happened. The Father took on the role of authority over the Son and Spirit. And then as for the Son and Spirit, it was their pleasure to submit to the Father's will, to execute the Father's plan, to form the world, and to fill it with life.

They work together in perfect harmony. Now that language of authority and submission, there are many cultures in the world today where that language is second nature to them.

It's just part of how they live. It's so normal. It would be incredibly strange if that hierarchy weren't in place. In our culture, we're allergic to hierarchy. We're allergic to authority and submission because we've seen it abused so much.

But the persons of the Trinity, they aren't like that. They aren't corrupted by sin. They handle this authority and submission so differently than you and I do. When you and I take authority, when we try to set up a hierarchy, our wicked pride, it leads us to lord it over others, to exploit others for our

benefit, to manipulate and abuse them.

Or if we're the ones underneath, at the bottom of the pile, we chafe against those who are in authority over us. We envy their status. We become bitter in our hearts towards them.

[33 : 59] We complain. Not so with the Trinity. When they began their work of creation, they remained equals with one another.

Equals in nature. Equals in being. In perfect love. Yet they now express that love by working in hierarchy. Continuing to love in harmony with one another. Sharing the same mindset. Having a singular will. And as we'll see next week, they continue to work in that way all throughout history, even now. There is no relationship so perfect, so marvelous, so pure, so powerful. There is no other God who could create such a world. This world, it is the created work of a beautiful triune God.

This world is created as a gift from a father to a son. This world is the work of a being in whom is the most important personal relationship there is.

[35 : 07] Yet you may be asking, you know Dave, I hear what you're saying, but when I look at the world, I just do not see what you're seeing.

Have you even watched the news? Why doesn't this world seem that beautiful? Why all the ugliness? Why all the misery?

Why all the suffering, the disease, the death, the conflict and despair, the oppression? What has marred this masterpiece of a triune God?

What has ruined the gift that the father has given to his son? That's the question we're going to consider next week. We're going to learn what has happened to our world.

We're going to learn what the triune God is doing to bring life and peace to our world once again.

But before we go there, we're going to finish today by considering what we can learn from the God who made this world good.

[36 : 09] What can we learn from the God who made this world good? Here's the truth of the matter. We live in the world of the Trinity. We live in the world of the Trinity.

You and I live in a world that is created by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Their world, it's all around us. It's in, it's all around us. The matter, the spirit, the grandeur, the intricacy.

It's there in the people that we see every day. What do we learn from all this? Of all the things we could say, let's start with four things for now. The first thing we learn is we learn that God the Father has created a good world.

We learn that God the Father has created a good world. It is a world that is distinct from God. If you, there are many people who believe that, you know, the world is just a part of God, that his being, you know, this world is just a part of his being.

And if so, this world that badly needs improvement indicates that we have a God who badly needs improvement. and he needs to grow alongside with us. But that's not the world that God has made.

[37 : 25] It is a world in need of improvement. But it is made by a perfect God. It bears his imprint. It is good because the persons who made it are good.

You know, many ancient people didn't look at the world and think, this is good. Many people in the early church, in fact, they fell prey to the philosophies of the day, to the thought processes of the day.

Many fell prey to the teachings of the Gnostics who looked at the material that makes up our world and the material things and the human body and they're like, this stuff is bad. This is bad.

This is inferior. This is limiting us. It's holding us back. But matter isn't evil. Our bodies aren't trash. The world is not a mistake.

God the Father has created a good world. This is good. Second, we learn that God the Father has revealed himself through the Son and the Spirit.

[38 : 29] God the Father has revealed himself through the Son and the Spirit. Jesus tells his disciples in John chapter 15, No longer do I call you servants for the servant does not know what his master is doing but I have called you friends for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

And again he says in John chapter 16, when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth for he will not speak on his own authority but whatever he hears he will speak and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

Do you want to know who God is? Do you want to know what God is like? Open the words of Scripture. See what the Spirit has written there. Stop trying to come up with your own ideas. Stop relying on your own intuitions and insights. Listen. Open and see what is written about the Son.

If you want to know who God is, if you want to know what God is like, look at his Son who is the image of the invisible God. Stop assuming you know and start learning.

[39 : 55] Humble yourself and come to know him. Third, we learn that God the Father models true fatherhood and loving authority.

We learn that God the Father models true fatherhood and loving authority. In Ephesians chapter 3, Paul begins one of his prayers by saying, for this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

God loved. Now, the point here is not that God looks at human fathers seeing them with their children and seeing human families and he thinks, hey, I'm kind of like that.

The point is that human families are the ones God created and he created them to be a model of his own family. It is his own family that is fundamental. It is his own family that they point to.

human fathers are a model of God the Father, who is the true Father, with a capital F. Human fatherhood is modeled on the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

[41 : 09] Isn't that amazing? If you're a father of children hearing me say this, boy, that really makes things, that really drives things home, doesn't it? In the way that you father your children, you are painting a portrait of what God is like.

You are saying something about who God is. If the father is an outgoing, life-giving God, then you also were created to be an outgoing, life-giving father.

You are meant to relate to your children, just like it is said in Proverbs 23, verse 26, my son, give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways.

If God the Father hides nothing from his son, then you too ought to open your innermost heart to your own children and ask to know theirs. Let them see how you live.

Let them see your thoughts and your desires. Show them the way of righteous relationships that God the Father has shown to you. And just like God the Father, human fathers ought to insist on respect and obedience from their children.

[42 : 18] Just like God the Father, they are also meant to be extravagant in their care, love, provision, protection for their children. And though this is true especially of fathers, it's also true of mothers and of all others in positions of authority.

As an example of this, the Apostle Peter says the same thing about the elders of a church in 1 Peter chapter 5. I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed.

Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Then conversely, human children are to show joyful respect and submission to their fathers, just as God the Son does to his own father.

And we ought to do the same to mothers and to all others in positions of authority. That's why Peter continues, likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders, the elders of the church.

[43 : 37] Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another. For God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. God does not wish to abolish hierarchy and authority altogether.

God wishes to redeem it, to make it something that is outgoing and life-giving just like him. Fourth and finally, we learn that God the Father has invited us to join him and his creating work.

When God created the first human beings, he made them to be like him in some ways, to reflect his glory, to represent him. In Genesis 1, we read, God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, plural, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the

earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

That plural, let us make man in our image, it leads then to a plural community of human beings, male and female, who become fruitful and multiply.

[45 : 09] And then they fill the earth. And they fill the earth not with exploiters, that's not what they were meant to do, with people who exploit the creation, but with people who reflect God, represent him rightly, and exercise authority with tender care.

The triune God invites us not only to join him by reproducing, by bearing children, he invites us to join him in creative ventures that cultivate beauty, that honor him. An example of this is, you know, when the tabernacle was being built in the wilderness.

Exodus 35, we read, Moses said to the people of Israel, see, the Lord has called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. He has filled him with the spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, with all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs.

To work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Aholi of the son of Ahissamach, of the tribe of Dan.

Notice that it is God, the Holy Spirit, who is empowering these two men for their work of creative skill, and empowering them to be teachers who instruct others in showing this creative skill.

[46 : 30] God honoring, culture-making works of beauty. They're a part of the work God wishes us to join him in. And even if you don't have an artistic bone in your body, all of the work a Christian does is work that is meant to be done for the glory of God the Son.

In Colossians 3, we're told, whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. Knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord, Christ. And finally, as we not only proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, the saving work of the Trinity, we continue to join God in his creative work by summoning other people to join us as fellow disciples of Christ.

We make disciples. We help them and teach them to become like the Son of God. Because Jesus has told us in Matthew chapter 28, that he is with us. right there with us as we do this in the name of the triune God.

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 in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

[47 : 57] and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. To join the Trinity in all of this creative work, I want to assure you it is not to give up on happiness.

It is not a call away from a happy life. The world of the Trinity is a happy life. as we join the fellowship of an outgoing, life-giving God.

A God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And this relationship with the Trinity, it really is the one and only personal relationship on which the world is founded.

Our God, let us know you. Let us know you as you really are. I confess that my thoughts of you have been so small.

I thought you were just someone small like myself. But you are so much greater. And you have so much more in mind for us.

[49 : 09] No eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor the heart of man has imagined what God has in store for those who love him. Lord, catch us up in this love.

Show us this relationship. Thank you for welcoming us into this large family. Thank you for showing us just a glimpse of who you are in eternity. This Trinitarian God, Father loving his Son, giving him his Spirit.

Teach us to marvel at you. And may this not remain some sort of intellectual exercise. May this be something that stirs up our hearts to share the love that you have for your Son.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.