

Three in One

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[0 : 00] It might be stating the obvious, but God is not human. God is not a created being. God is not someone that we can change or we can shape into our image.

God is not something that we can contain. In John chapter 4, Jesus has this verbal interaction, I guess sort of a stoush, with a woman who is trying really hard to stop him getting too close to her, trying to hold him at a distance.

And he's already exposed her vulnerable side when he tells her to go and call her husband and she says, I don't have one. And he says, you're right, you've had five and the bloke you currently live you're not married to.

Live with you're not married to. And she tries to turn the conversation to anywhere but herself and she just goes all religious. As you do.

And part of Jesus' reply is, God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. So God is not human.

[1 : 12] Jesus tells us that he is spirit. The scriptures say that the universe shouts at us displaying his glory. We use words to describe God, all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere.

We sing songs like, immortal, invisible, God-only wise, or indescribable, uncontainable. God is spirit.

God is spirit. God is not human. He is vastly greater than it is possible for us to conceive or to imagine. He is almighty God who shows us just enough of himself that we might know him and have eternal life.

Perhaps we only see a minuscule bit of God, but it's plenty. And in our naivety, people make lesser things God.

So Romans chapter 1 says, We worship and serve created things rather than the creator who is forever blessed. We worship our understandings of the world.

[2 : 19] We make humanity and our thought life the pinnacle of the universe. Lawrence Krauss, the physicist on Q&A; the other week, was glorying in science and his own extravagant understandings of nothingness.

You see, without God, we don't think of ourselves as specks in a vast universe. We have an exalted view of our capacities and our intelligence, and we exalt ourselves over everything, including God. Now we've seen some awesome things about God from the scriptures as we've worked through this series. We have seen that God, who is spirit, who is hidden, that he has chosen to reveal himself to us, his creatures.

God has put on flesh. He has voluntarily accepted human limitation. He has entered into time at a particular place. He was born into a human family.

He entered his creation as a flesh and blood person, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. And so the hidden God of the universe is revealed as a gracious heavenly father in the words and ministry of his son.

[3 : 36] Jesus teaches us to pray to the father. He tells us that God the father loves the world. He says, if you have seen me, you have seen the father.

And we've been saying that the only way that we can begin to know what God is like, the true God of the universe, is through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus himself said, John 14, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the father except through me. Jesus is the son who serves his father. The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus said in John 16, The father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. The bishop, Glenn Davies, spoke to us from John 16 last week and he said

that Jesus sends his spirit to us.

The spirit knows his father's business. When Jesus goes back into heaven, the spirit continues the ministry of Jesus into all the world. And Jesus tells us what that ministry will be in John 17, verse 8. [4 : 54] When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. You look at the Lord Jesus as a man and his ministry was restricted to one town and one village at a time.

It's wherever his two feet took him. And he said to his disciples that it's good for me to go away. It's for your good that I go away because when I go, I will send my spirit.

And the ministry of Jesus would be continued by his spirit at work in the hearts of all God's people everywhere. And so in Acts chapter 2, Peter preaches that this is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy where God would pour out his spirit on all flesh.

What God has revealed to us about himself impacts life. I was sitting on the headland down at D.Y. Beach nearly two weeks ago and reading my book, having some quiet time, enjoying the peace, enjoying the beauty, the rainstorms over the water and the sun peeking up from behind.

Beautiful place to be. And a young man about Sam's age, Cameron, very polite, came up to me and he said, can I show you my photos of the sun this morning?

[6 : 14] And he's got his iPhone or whatever it was in his hands and my reaction inside, sort of like, oh no, what do you want? And he says, can I share with you what I believe about God who made this beautiful creation?

And it soon became clear he was a Jehovah's Witness. And I think I'm ashamed to say that some of my history with them is to have a point scoring debate over the nature of God, blow for blow, so you can win, who can come off with the most or the least bruises, whatever it is.

But this time was different. We had a delightful conversation, man to man, person to person, that went on for more than an hour. I got sunburned. The cloud had gone.

But it felt like a God-given time. Later on, Cameron said that he'd been sitting where I was earlier in the morning, and he was heading home in his van and he prayed that God would give him someone to share with, so he came back and saw me sitting where he had been.

And God brought Cameron to a pastor that is in the middle of a preaching series about the nature of God. Isn't that amazing? But you know, it was challenging for me as well to sit and talk to someone who believed in the creator God of the universe, who believed in significant things about Jesus Christ, who certainly believed in the Holy Spirit of God, was refreshing because you don't even get to first base with atheists.

[7 : 56] And I taught scripture after scripture with Cameron and most of them are fresh in my mind because that's what I've been preaching. And I tried to avoid old chestnuts where I just knew we'd differ and I knew his Bible would say it different from what my Bible was.

It was a waste of time going there. And at an incredible number of points, Cameron would nod his head and he'd say, we believe that. We believe that.

I keep saying the scripture says, not what we believe. The scripture says, Anglicans, it doesn't matter what Anglicans believe, it matters what the scriptures say, doesn't it? And I got to a point where I said to him that even though we have much in common, I suspect we think about Jesus and God differently.

And I'll say it quickly, it took a long time with him. You think Jesus is created. I think he is fathered by God. That was a big issue in the early church, the Nicene Creed that we say in the communion service was an attempt to put things right and express clearly what the scriptures are teaching. We believe in one God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Sorry, we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the father, true God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the father.

[9 : 24] And I said a second thing to him. I said, I think the scriptures show that Jesus is king. If you'd been here the last few weeks, you would have heard us look to Revelation and the lamb and the father worshipped on the throne of God at the end of the Bible.

He is God and it is right for us to worship him. And thirdly, you think the Holy Spirit of God is a force, a power that God sends that we all plug into.

You know, the force be with you, Star Wars type movies, all that sort of stuff. And you look at the scriptures and you can see why people would say a thing like that. But he is that and he is more.

He is a person. So in John 16, Jesus speaks about his spirit and he says that when he comes, the spirit that is, when he comes, he will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. The spirit is a he on Jesus' tongue. In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira are accused of lying to the Holy Spirit, lying to the person of God.

[10:25] In other places, we can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit of God. He is a person. So Cameron and I had this really respectful conversation, a delightful conversation.

And I think it was provocative and it was challenging for both of us. I had to go away and reflect on some of the stuff we talked about. We had much in common but we differed on Jesus.

And I would have loved to have prayed with that young man at the end of the conversation but I felt constrained because I would have wanted to pray, Dear Lord Jesus or Father.

names by which God reveals himself to us and names that Cameron was not able to own.

The Lord Jesus has shown us that God can be approached very personally and those of us who have come to know those of us who have come to know him have come through Jesus but we have come to call him Father.

[11:37] I would have loved to have had unity with Cameron but we didn't. We had significant differences about Jesus Christ. True unity is to be found in Jesus Christ.

I worship Jesus as Lord and God and King. Cameron wanted to hold Jesus as important but he thought it was wrong to worship him.

The biggest impact this series has had on me personally and let me tell you I've had the opportunity to tell a number of people this over the last few weeks and it's just been an absolute delight for me. I hope it's been a delight for them but it's the privilege that we have in calling God Father.

We only understand God as Father only through faith in the Lord Jesus. I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the Father except through me.

John 1 says as many as receive Jesus to those who believed in his name God gave the right to be called children of God. Not everyone gets to call God Father only those who receive and believe in the Lord Jesus.

[12:54] The Lord Jesus is the one who brings us into God's family. William's baptism this morning is about trusting in the promises of the Lord Jesus and entering into the safety and the security of God's family.

I think it's an absolute joy and it is for me at the moment to see that the Christian life is a journey in getting to know the Father and we do that by believing in the Son that he has sent into the world and he is the one who gives us a true view of his Father who is hidden from us in heaven.

I'm still learning what it means to trust him day by day but in the security of his Son. Jesus prayed in John 17 Righteous Father though the world does not know you I know you and they know that you have sent me I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known to them in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.

Earlier on in John 17 Jesus speaks to his Father just before he is arrested and he says Father the time has come glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you for you have granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

Now this is eternal life that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work that you gave me to do and now Father glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

[14:41] There is unity there is love there is mutuality there is order there is submission and there is delight within God himself.

Father Son and Holy Spirit work with a wonderful love and unity. You come to the scriptures and Jesus is not the grudgingly obedient Son that most of us have been or that we have at home who stomps off saying what do I have to do this for?

He's in on the plan he trusts his father he delights to do God's will he wants his father to be seen as the great and loving God that he is. In John 17 it is only his father who understands him his father knows the cost he knows the glory that Jesus left behind in heaven to come to earth and to ransom for our sins.

Jesus is the obedient son he exercises his God given authority to give eternal life to those the father has given him. Glorify me he says that I may glorify you.

See Jesus shines this massive light on how great his father is by doing the work that his father gave him to do and then Jesus prays father shine your light on me glorify me in your presence with the

glory that I had before the world even began bring me home bring me back into your presence shine your light on me that I might be seen for who I am before the world even began Westminster Capitationism the Anglicans almost adopted it the Presbyterians took it it's first question it's teaching to teach the Christian faith the first question is what is the chief end of man and the answer is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever Jesus the perfect man did just that everything about him his whole life put his father in the spotlight he gave him the glory he was hungry to be in his presence forever he was praying to his father to bring him home he wanted to be safe in the presence of his father he wanted to be reunited with him in heaven so you see that there is this tremendous unity and oneness in the way that

[17 : 06] God relates within himself father son holy spirit all different in role but one in unity and purpose and that dynamic has implications for a lot of things but two God given institutions in particular church and marriage in church we aren't united by brand being Anglican is not what gives us unity unity is found by belief in a message John 17 verses 20 21 Jesus prays my prayer is not for them alone I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one father just as you are in me and I am in you may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me Jesus prays for us the bishop said that last week he's praying for us 2000 years ago we have come to know Jesus if we've come to Christ that's an answer to Jesus prayer we have which has been empowered by the spirit of the living

God not united by brand Anglican Baptist Pentecostal isn't what gives us unity unity comes from a common belief in Jesus Christ we have come to know God through the scriptures it is a spirit empowered work that turns the lights on and hand in hand with unity comes love verse 26 chapter 17 John 17 I have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love that you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them Jesus is about to be executed and he is totally confident how much his father loves him John chapter 3 the father loves the son and has placed everything in his hands John chapter 5 the father loves the son and shows him all that we talked about this at staff the other day

I was supposed to say a wise Christian said this but I think it was Steve and he said this is like a group hug or a love in the father loves the son the son loves the father and Jesus brings us into the hug in order that the love you have in me may be in them may be in us one of the own for the way that we love one another that the culture of this congregation would be the interconnection and love and care that exists between the members of this church family widely across generations across cultures and

I would not dare say that we have arrived but what a good thing for us to shoot for true love and unity between us that reflects the greater love and unity which is to be found in God himself it bears witness to our heavenly father's love and goodness and it gives him the glory marriage is similar you can take for granted that love should be central in a marriage people don't talk about weddings without talking love you know wedding cards have happy couples surrounded by love hearts don't they and we know from our own marriages I know from my own marriage that lots of marriages come up short people are bruised expectations aren't met roles are confused trust is shattered the focus shifts from a servant hearted care of one another of the other and for some of us marriage is a war zone with damage and rubble which is all over the place love is lost and unity is nowhere to be seen

Kerry and I needed considerable help a small number of years ago to work through a lot of damage grace of God we had huge help great show on the ABC at the moment Thursday nights don't look at next week go back and look from the beginning watch from the beginning but called making couples happy and it follows four couples whose marriages are in chaos and in real danger of all age husbands and wives and the roles they play or 1 Peter chapter 1 like verse 3 1

[22 : 51] Peter chapter 3 verse 1 wives in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that if any of them do not believe the word they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives passages like that are very abrasive when you view them from the actuality of the broken landscapes that we're living in and the potential for abuse and the experience of that by both husbands and wives is real and it is extremely painful God has not called us to order and to roles to inflict pain he has called us to the sheer beauty of love and unity that he is the father who loves his son the son who delights to submit to his father the holy spirit who does the bidding of the father and the son working powerfully in and through us equals as

God unified in purpose different in how they do their work within the team there's no quick fix to a badly damaged marriage if that is you you may need significant help and assistance and you need to submit to it and we can point you in a few directions but it is a word to all of us who are married that unity and love are there to be built and perhaps to be rediscovered and a constructive place to start is in meditating on who God himself is the son who is so confident of his father's love that he submits to his will and he lays down his life for the church the father who glorifies his son the son who delights to glorify his father a husband and a wife who are looking out for the other a husband and a wife who delight in each other a husband and a wife who are full equals a husband and a wife who delight to take different parts in the marriage a husband and a wife who do not abuse the power of leadership or the power of submission a husband and wife who glory in the other marriage finds its true purpose in the nature of our

God who created it may God richly bless our marriages and our church as we seek to reflect the glory of God Father Son and Holy Spirit in these most crucial of all relationships may the love of God be seen in our marriages may it be seen in our church the Lord Jesus says by this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another I will be glorified if you love one another Amen Lord Jesus please help us to love one another we know that when we look at you in all your perfect magnificence we just come up so far short and yet we thank you that you have revealed yourself to us and something of the magnificence of who you are and that as we look to you Lord Jesus you help us to make sense of the most intimate of human relationships and marriages but also in this most essential of relationships that you have brought your people into which is your church and so father in mercy and forgiveness and with grace and with kindness might we relate with love to one another in our marriages and also in this church Amen