

Session 9: Trinitarian Fellowship: The Word, The Spirit, and Life Together

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“Obviously God must guide us in a way that will develop spontaneity in us. **The development of character, rather than direction in this, that, and the other matter, must be the primary purpose of the Father. He will guide us, but he won’t override us.** That fact should make us use caution with the method of sitting down with a pencil and blank sheet of paper to write down the instructions dictated by God for the day. Suppose a parent would dictate to the child minutely everything he is to do during the day. The child would be stunted under that regime. The parent must guide in such a matter and to the degree that autonomous character capable of making right decisions for itself is produced. God does the same.” ~ E. Stanley Jones

We must emphasize the distance that God leaves between him and us, but also the nearness of God. The distance is how **he leaves us room** to decide, to feel, to experience the consequences of events, and to learn **how to look to God in everything without expecting to be told what to do.**

Where it all begins...in the Trinity. The Trinity is the model of life with God.

John 17:3 - *Eternal life is knowing God...*This is eternal living.

What was God doing before he created the world? They were enjoying themselves...their fellowship with one another. They were enjoying one another in the dimensions of personal reality that makes the created universe look like a pinpoint.

The greatness of the persons that make up the Trinity is the ultimate and eternal reality. It is the Kingdom of God before there was an Earth. It is the persons of the Trinity being in love with one another and adoring one another.

The only thing of great value in the universe is the experiences of a person. Persons are made up of experiences...spiritual substance. Experiences are not physical realities they are spiritual realities. And that’s where you meet God -in your experiences.

Intimacy is a matter of shared experiences. To be intimate with God is to share his experiences. Conversation is the first level of shared experience.

What was the glory that Jesus had with the Father before the creation of the world? The marvelous company of persons sharing one another.

John 17:21 - *That they may all be one...that the world may believe that thou did send me.* Jesus prayed for us, his apprentices in Kingdom living, that we should know one another with the kind of intimacy that is present between him and his Father.

- Intimacy makes us vulnerable. Consequently, we keep our distance.
- *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer -He came to understand what it was like for people to come together in Christ. In Christ is the only safe way to come together.
- All the evils that you see in human life come from alienation, that in turn comes from thinking wrongly about God.
- It’s only as you come to know the complete safety that you have in the Kingdom of God that you can begin to move towards other people in the kind of shared life that is found in the Trinity.

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Many people confuse oneness with identity and mess up the Trinity.

There's no subordination in the Trinity. Why? Not because they're identical but because the members of the Trinity would not put up with it.

The Trinity is one and invites us into its fellowship. The extension of the Trinity to human beings who have become disciples of Christ and been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the Bible talks about the *name*, they're talking about the *reality*. Matt 28:19 is not saying *as you get them wet!* It is saying, pull the disciples into communitarian, Trinitarian fellowship, and they begin to get a taste of what real life is like.

That glorious community stands forth in Earth and when people see it, there's no argument left.

That's the true way to present Christ. Embodied in his people.

The name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the powerful reality of the Trinity and that gives us a chance to think more about what it is for people to be one. To be united.

Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless not I, but Christ, lives in me.*

- Jesus was not crucified so that we would not have to be crucified. He was crucified so that we could be crucified with him.
- What I'm living for on my own no longer governs my existence.
- Christ and I carry on the conversation –not about my old life in my own kingdom. It's now about God's Kingdom and what he is doing. And that takes us down to the ordinary affairs of ordinary life.

How do I know that Kingdom? Finding it where I am... most of the time I'm at work.

Why do I have to spend so much time at work? Because of Genesis 1:26

The first stage of getting over job hatred is to acknowledge the presence of God in your work.

We must enable people to see their life in a different way! The darkness and futility of lives is a function of ignorance...ignorance of God.

Communion arises at a point where conversation can now stop, and people will still be together.

Union is action together where there isn't even a thought that that is happening. It just takes over.

JOY is one of the marks of Jesus. It characterizes the times that are hard, too.

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If you don't have a kind of life in you that is resurrection life, Trinitarian life, then it's not possible to share in that life.

- ...a dog can't really share the life of a human being. They can be a part of it, but they can't share it. The life that is in a kitten is a *certain kind of life*.
- It's so important to understand this matter of *sharing a kind of life*.
- We were dead in trespasses and sin, just like the kitten is dead to a chess game.
- **It's a different form of life.**
- Genesis 1:26. We're given responsibilities to care for what is good and to produce it under God, *sharing his life*.

If we live in this Trinitarian life that is literally out of this world, things may happen that we don't want to happen, that we don't like or enjoy, but that life is greater than anything that can happen to us in this world. It's not possible to take that away because it's rooted in the Trinity.

Revelation 22:5 – This is where we are headed. So many Christians have grown older and begin acting as if their life is at an end. But it's hardly begun! But if they don't understand who they are and what kind of world they're in, then they think that's it. Ministry to older people in terms of the Kingdom of God is much neglected -their life has hardly begun! *"There will no longer be any night and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever."*

Conversation advances into communion and communion into union

Galatians 2:20 - *It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me.*

Philippians 1:21 – *For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

"Something comes into our own energies and capacities and expands them. We are laid hold of by something greater than ourselves. We can face things, create things, accomplish things, that in our own strength would have been impossible. The Holy Spirit seems to mix and mingle his powers with our own so that what happens is both heightening our own power and a gift to us from outside. This is so real and definite as attaching an appliance to an electric outlet though of course such a mechanical analogy is not altogether satisfactory." ~ Sam Shoemaker

... there's an energy that comes from outside but when it seizes the machine you can't distinguish the machine from the action and the power that goes with it.