



EST FONDS VITAE

DATE

November 11, 2018

SERIES

John: That You May Believe

TITLE & PASSAGE

The Triune God
John 20:19-29

OCCASION

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter on the Lord's Day to the congregation of First Baptist Church of Diana, TX.

INTRODUCTION

In our day and in our modern American Evangelical culture, it is taboo to draw hard lines around doctrinal statements. Moreover, it is outright offensive to speak in dogmatic terms about high doctrines, especially those that seem too academic, too irrelevant, and/or too exclusive. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is as high as doctrines get, and it is often avoided for all the reasons listed above. May God help us to see the wonder of God's triunity, and may we know and love the triune God who reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

MAIN POINT

Christ must be embraced as God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

EMAIL QUESTIONS TO PASTOR@FBCDIANA.ORG

SCRIPTURE READING

John 20:19–29 (ESV)

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

MAIN POINT

Christ must be embraced as God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

- (1) JOHN’S “GREAT COMMISSION”**
- (2) THE TRIUNE GOD ON DISPLAY**
- (3) THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY**
- (4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

MESSAGE

(1) JOHN'S "GREAT COMMISSION"

- There are **striking similarities** in the Gospel-writers' accounts of Christ's commissioning actions and statements.
 - The Great Commission passage in Matthew: "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 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. And behold, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18–20)
 - Luke ends his Gospel by saying, "Then he [Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem. **You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.** But stay in the city until you are **clothed with power from on high**'" (Luke 24:45–49)
 - John's record of Christ's commissioning: "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As **the Father has sent me**, even so **I am sending you.**' And when he had said this, **he breathed on them** and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If **you forgive** the **sins** of any, they are forgiven them; if **you withhold forgiveness** from any, it is withheld'" (v21-23)
- The **difficulties** we might have in this passage are resolved by the "Great Commission" context.
 - Did they "receive the Holy Spirit" (v22) at this moment, or later on the day of Pentecost, as Luke records (Acts 2:1-4)?
 - If the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Jesus' resurrection (v19), but on the day of Pentecost, then what does it mean that Jesus "breathed on them" (v22) here?
 - What does Jesus mean by saying that His disciples can "forgive sins" or "withhold forgiveness" (v23)?
- We shall consider this commission and our part in it next week, as we focus our attention on John's call to "believe" in verses 30-31.

So, the context of our passage this morning is Jesus' resurrection appearance and His commissioning or "**sending**" (v21) of His disciples into the world to be Holy-Spirit-empowered ambassadors or disciple-makers by declaring "**Peace**," just as Jesus Himself declared, and calling people to "**believe**," just as Jesus Himself urged.

But, what is it that sinners are to "**believe**" (v27) in order to enjoy "**peace**" (v19) and "**blessing**" (v29)?

John tells us that his aim is to have his reader "**believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...**" (v31).

John even records an example of Jesus proclaiming a blessing on a particular statement of belief from Thomas... a profound statement about Jesus...

(2) THE TRIUNE GOD ON DISPLAY

- The **Father** in our passage:
 - The Father "**sent [His Son]**" (v21).
 - The Father declares "**Peace**" through His Son (v19, 21, 26).
 - The Father's "**forgiveness**" is offered through the message of Christ's disciples (v23).
 - The Father's "**blessing**" is upon those who "**believe**" in Christ (v29).
- The **Son** in our passage:
 - The Son was "**sent**" by His Father (v21).
 - The Son declared "**Peace**" based upon His death and resurrection (v19, 21, 26).
 - The Son commissioned His disciples to proclaim "**forgiveness**" everywhere (v23).
 - The Son demonstrates that "**the Holy Spirit**" comes from Him (v22).
 - The Son accepts Thomas' confession of Jesus' divinity (v28-29).
 - The Son proclaims "**blessings**" upon those who "**believe**" as Thomas spoke (v29).
- The **Holy Spirit** in our passage:
 - The Holy Spirit comes from or is "**breathed out**" from the Son (v22).
 - The Holy Spirit empowers the disciples' proclamation of "**forgiveness**" (v23).

So, there is reference to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in this passage... and Jesus is called both “**Lord**” and “**God**” (v28).

But, how are we to understand each of these three persons? And, how are we to understand the unity of God, so clearly demanded by Scripture?

(3) THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

- Some objections to this doctrine
 - ***The word “trinity” is not in the Bible.***
 - The words “**inerrancy**,” “**monotheism**,” and “**incarnation**” are not in the Bible either, but most of you probably understand at least 1-2 of these words... and each of these words represent biblical concepts.
 - There are a slew of doctrines labeled by an extrabiblical word or phrase which points to a biblical idea or concept.
 - Atheism, Ecclesiology, Eternal Security, Penal Substitutionary Atonement, and the Mortification of Sin are just some examples.
 - ***The doctrine is too hard to understand.***
 - “**Too hard to understand? I’d say it’s impossible to fully grasp!**”
 - God is inexhaustible! His character and nature is always more than we can get our heads around. The being of God is something we should expect to have difficulty understanding.
 - You can’t even understand your own being, essence, and nature! Why would you think you should be able to easily understand God’s being or essence?
 - But, if we shy away from difficult doctrines (because of effort or offense) just because they are difficult, then we have effectively cut ourselves off from spiritual growth and we have hindered our worship.
 - Profound doctrines move us to passionate doxology!
 - ***This doctrine is irrelevant to my ordinary life.***
 - Oh, my friend... what are you here for?

- Why did God create you? ...only to eat, work, play, and sleep?
- Aren't you created in the image of God... for His glory... to know, to glorify, and to enjoy Him?!
 - Are you really satisfied with what you know of God right this instant?
 - Do you have no desire to know Him better?
 - If God opens His divine mouth to tell you more about Himself this morning, will you raise your hand to say that He may simply be quiet?
- The doctrine of the Trinity comes from our need to understand Scripture
 - Let us see **John's repeated emphasis** on the **triunity of God**, only focusing on the first chapter of his Gospel.
 - **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"** (1:1).
 - The **"word"** (logos) already existed **"in the beginning,"** and this **"word"** is both God and **"with"** God.
 - In this single passage, there is eternity, unity with God, and distinction in the Godhead.
 - **"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father [monogenēs para patros], full of grace and truth"** (1:14).
 - The **"word"** who is both God and with God is the **"unique one from/with the Father."**
 - **"No one has ever seen God; the only God [monogenēs theos], who is at the Father's side, he has made him known"** (1:18).
 - While there is a textual variant here, the likely original text is a strong and clear affirmation of plurality in the Godhead.
 - The **"only God"** is **"at the Father's side."**
 - **"And John bore witness: 'I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him [Jesus (1:29)]. I myself did not know him, but he [God (1:6)] who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God"** (1:32–34).

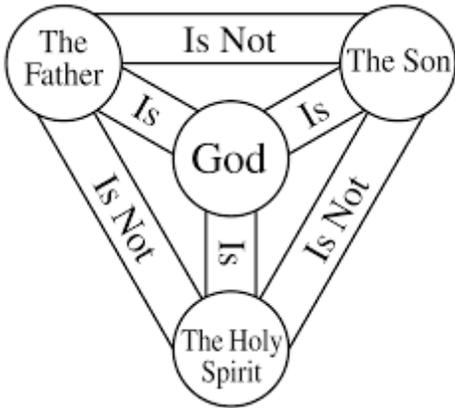
- “the Spirit” or “the Holy Spirit” descends “from heaven,” and this is an overt reference to the Spirit of God or God the Spirit (Is. 42:1-3, 61:1).
- “He who sent” John is “God” (Jn. 1:6), and must, in context, refer to God the Father.
- “the Son of God” is one who “baptizes with the Holy Spirit,” indicating the Son’s authority to act with/beside (probably with authority over) the Holy Spirit.
- “He [Jesus] said... ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the **Son of Man**’” (1:51).
 - Jesus called Himself the “**Son of Man**” repeatedly, and this was a reference to OT prophecy about the Messiah who was to come.
 - Daniel prophesied, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came on like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14).
 - Here again, we see both the “**son of man**” and the “**Ancient of Days**” as divine.
 - Both are glorious, both have universal dominion, and both are everlasting/eternal.
 - In the full context of Scripture, we are able to understand that both God the Father and God the Son are the focus of such a passage... This is exactly fitting for the way Jesus used the phrase in John 1:51.
- Let’s take a **closer look** at the profound verse **in our passage** today.

“26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ 27 Then he said to Thomas,

‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ 28 Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ 29 Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”

- Jesus calls for belief over unbelief
 - “Do not disbelieve, but believe” (v27)
- Thomas confesses
 - “My Lord and my God!” (v28)
- Jesus proclaims a blessing on those who believe as Thomas did without having to see what Thomas saw.
 - “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v29)
- What was Thomas’s blessed confession?
 - Jesus is “My Lord and my God!” (v28)
 - Jesus is Lord (*kurios*) and God (*theos*).
 - This is an unmistakable affirmation of the full authority and deity of Christ.
 - This is even more profound if one takes the basic Jewish worldview into account. The Jewish Shema was well known to all Jews, including Thomas.
 - “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6:4).
- **Christ must be embraced as God...** but doesn’t Christ call His Father God as well? And doesn’t Christ give His Spirit to His disciples?
- **So, Christ must be embraced as God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.**

- A simple explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity



- There is one God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5; Jn. 17:3)
- The Father is God (Matt. 6:9; Jn. 20:17; Eph. 1:3)
- The Son is God (Jn. 1:1-18, 20:28; Col. 1:15-20; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:1-3)
- The Holy Spirit is God (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11, 3:16, 12:4-6)
- The Father is not the Son or the Spirit; The Son is not the Father or the Spirit; the Spirit is not the Son or the Father.

- In John 16:7-15, Jesus promises to “go away” from His disciples and “send” the Holy Spirit to them (v7). Jesus also says that He is going “to the Father” (v10), and the Spirit will “glorify” the Son upon His arrival (v14).
 - This passage (as many others) clearly presents distinction in person and unity in mission and attributes.

Christ must be embraced as God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

Colossians 1:15–20 (ESV)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.”

It is this Jesus Christ who saves sinners... this Jesus Christ who reconciles guilty people with the Holy God... this Jesus Christ who rules and reigns over all things this very moment... this Jesus Christ who is worthy of our worship, honor, awe, and praise today!

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe in Jesus?

- a. Do you believe, rather than disbelieve?
- b. Do you believe He is the Savior for sinners, like you?

2. Do you believe the kinds of things Jesus demands that you believe about Him?

- a. Do you believe He is the Christ – God’s promised Messiah of old?
- b. Do you believe He died and rose again?
- c. Do you believe He is God?
- d. Do you believe He is the one who sends His Spirit to indwell and empower His people in the world?
- e. Do you believe He is soon to return to this world in divine judgment and to ultimately save those who believe in Him?

3. Does God’s self-revelation move you to worship?

- a. If profound doctrines move us to passionate doxology, then how is your doxology today?
 - i. Do you pray with praise?
 - ii. Do you sing with joy?
 - iii. Are you moved by WHO God is, and not just by what He might do for you?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR THIS PASSAGE/TOPIC

Thomas: A Man of Mature Faith by Wil Pounds

<http://www.abideinchrist.com/messages/jn20v24.pdf>

My Lord and My God! by C.H. Spurgeon

<https://www.monergism.com/my-lord-and-my-god-john-2028>

Trinity by Various Authors at BibleTraining.org

<https://www.biblicaltraining.org/library/trinity>

The word Trinity is not in the Bible by Matt Slick

<https://www.monergism.com/my-lord-and-my-god-john-2028>