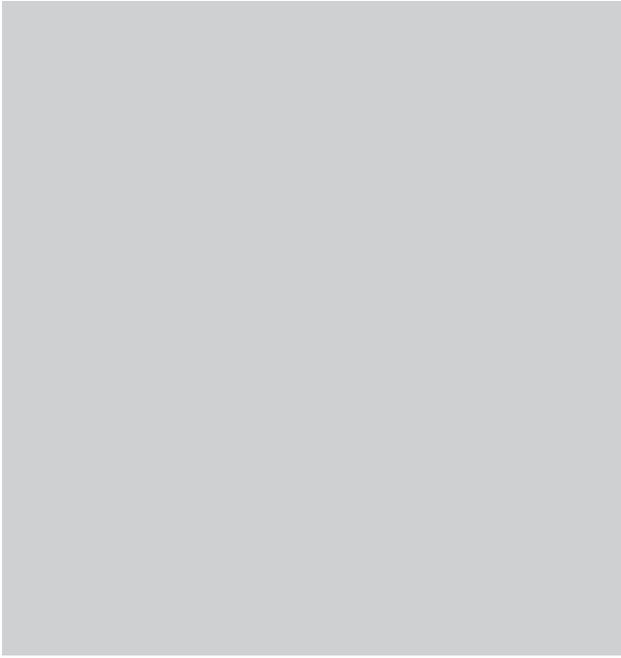


THE TRINITY

Community Group Series



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SESSION 1

God revealed

GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US

As imperfect beings living in an imperfect world we can never fully trust ourselves, or even those around us.

If we are to have a correct understanding of who God is, we will need something external to ourselves.

The Bible presents a revelation direct from God; although man was used, he has not distorted the message.

Once we have accepted the Bible, we should not be surprised to discover that some things are hard to understand.

Deut 29:29 - Some things will remain hidden from us, but what we know we celebrate and pass on. 2 Cor 13:14 – God has revealed Himself to be both one and three.

The Trinity defined

Definition: God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; each person is fully God, and there is one God.

The word trinity means "tri-unity" or "three-in-oneness"

Summary: God is three persons. Each person is fully God. There is one God.

Why study the Trinity?

Because this is how God has revealed Himself. If we are to know God, we must know Him on His terms.

The Trinity presents the most astounding picture of unity and diversity.

So much of what we do here on earth requires teamwork. Often we see unity and diversity treated as trade-offs.

Each member of the Trinity has a different role, but each supports and honours the other two.

There is no greater example of teamwork than the Trinity.

An understanding and appreciation of the Trinity is crucial to so much of our practical daily events.

Some verses to meditate on

Gen 1:26 – “Let us make man in our image”

Isaiah 6:8 – “Whom Shall I send, and who will go for us?”

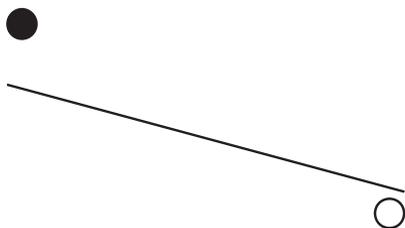
John 1:1 – “the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Conclusion

The Trinity in many ways remains a mystery. We cannot fully understand it. But we can define it.

Louis Berkhof says: “It is especially when we reflect on the relation of the three persons to the divine essence that all analogies fail us and we become deeply conscious of the fact that the Trinity is a mystery far beyond our comprehension.

*It is the incomprehensible glory of the Godhead”
For this we worship.*



SESSION 2

[All three are equally God]

Letting the Bible speak for itself

The word Trinity never appears in the Bible. But it does define extremely well what we do read in the Bible. The Bible is our source for all truth revealed from God. Let's allow it to speak for itself.

God is three persons

John 15:26 – Here we see the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus. They are spoken of as distinct persons.

Other verses to meditate on: Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, Jude 1:20-21, 1 Cor 12:4-6 ("Lord" is a reference to Jesus)

God the Father is fully God

This is supported right from Genesis to Revelation.

Jesus is fully God

John 1:1 – Jesus is called "the Word" and He is also called "God".

John 20: 27-28 – Thomas calls Jesus "God". Jesus never corrects him. Isaiah 9:6 – A prophecy of Jesus clearly refers to Him as "Mighty God".

The Spirit is fully God

Matt 28: 19 - Once we have established that the Father and the Son are both God, anyone else included in their company has to be very special. In fact it can only mean one thing!

Ps 139:7-8 – The Spirit is attributed with omnipresence. But God alone can be omnipresent. Acts 5:3-4 – Ananias lies to the Holy Spirit, this is then equated with lying to God.

There is one God

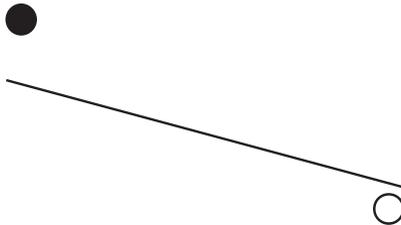
Deut 6:4-5 – We do not worship multiple Gods. There is only one God.

James 2:19 – Again we see that God is one.

Isaiah 45:5-6 – Apart from the God revealed to us in scripture, there is no other.

Conclusion

If we are to have a whole-Bible theology, and if we are to remain true to all scripture, we can only conclude that God is three, and at the same time one.



SESSION 3

The ultimate dream team



God has perfect fellowship within Himself

God did not create us because He needed friendship. He has perfect fellowship in Himself. He created us out of love.

The Trinity represents perfect fellowship, perfect harmony and perfect teamwork.

When we worship God and have fellowship with Him, we should be humbled to know that God is including us in something that has been happening from eternity past.

Being created in God's image, we too have a desire and capacity for fellowship.

When we express fellowship and friendship with God and with others we are enjoying something that God has shared with us.

Unity and diversity in perfect harmony

Unity in the midst of diversity is one of our world's greatest longings.

The motto on the South African coat of arms is "diverse people unite", and South Africa has been called the "rainbow nation."

Yet so often we find that our diversity actually causes us to be divided. We often feel unable to relate to those who come from different cultures and backgrounds.

In the Trinity we find diversity:

The Father plans and leads – John 3:16, Eph 1:9-10, Gal 4:4
The Son obeys and accomplishes – John 6:38, Heb 10:5-7
The Spirit applies, seals and confirms – John 14:26, Eph 1:13

In the Trinity we find unity:

John 14: 9-11 – To have seen Jesus is to have seen the Father. They are one.

John 14:23 – To love Jesus is to love the Father.

John 14:26 & 16:13-15 – The Spirit speaks only what the Son says and glorifies the Son, not himself.

The Trinity is a beautiful picture of each member glorifying the others.

We never see any member of the Trinity wishing it had the role of another.

We never see any member of the Trinity trying to take glory from another.

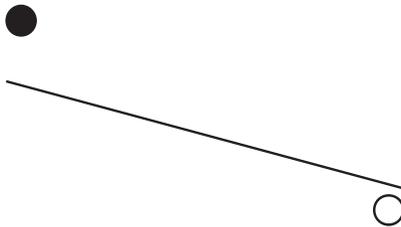
They dwell together in perfect unity for all of eternity!

Our call to working in team

Almost every day we find ourselves working in team. When we know God as three-in-one, we will desire to imitate Him as best we can.

It is in God's very nature to work in team. He has called us to be like Him in this regard.

Each member of the Trinity is secure in who they are and what their role is. We will need this if we are to be team players like Them.



SESSION 4

Priority is not superiority

Authority, headship and submission

Our understanding of authority needs to flow from the Trinity and not the fallen world. In the Fallen world we see an abuse of authority and a rebellion of followers.

But in the Trinity we see servant leadership and willing submission.

1 Cor 11:3 – The Father is the head of Christ.

Heb 5:7, Luke 22:42 – Jesus submitted and is subordinate to the Father.

John 16:13 – The Spirit says only what He hears.

Phil 2:9 – As the head, the Father gives the Son honour and glorifies Him by lifting Him up.

In the Trinity we see that headship does not mean superiority. All three are equal.

But we do still see headship expressed by the person called to that role.

Reflection: Sometimes we have authority over others and sometimes we are subject to others. As a group, try think of ways in which our response to authority could become more like that which we see within the Trinity.

Marriage

Biblical marriage is a profound and beautiful picture of the Trinity.

Eph 5:22-30 – We clearly still have two separate people, the husband and the wife. Each has different roles.

Eph 5:31 – Yet at the same time they are also “one flesh.” They thus have absolute equality.

Gen 1:27 – When God created mankind He created him male and female, two yet one, in the image of the Trinity.

In a husband and wife we have two-in-one. Maybe children make up the third member? Or one could also say maybe God is to act as the extra member? Or maybe God just wanted us to remember that we are in His image by being two-in-one, but certainly not divine like Him who is three-in-one.

The church

1 Cor 12:12 – In the church we have “many members” yet at the same time only “one body” (see also Eph 2:14).

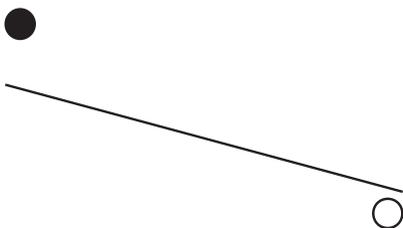
1 Cor 12:14-26 – We have different members in our church with different roles and different gifts, but we all depend upon each other for help.

By being active members of church life and working in team with the other parts of the body, we are displaying the Trinitarian nature of our God.

Eph 2:11-22 – Here we see people from diverse cultural backgrounds coming together as “one new man”.

Conclusion

When people object to the Trinity, saying that it makes no sense, we should be able to point to our marriages and to our churches to explain what it looks like.





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