

We are in a 3-week vision series incapsulating who we are called to be as a church. Get last week's sermon! Enjoy Jesus is a robust theological summary of what the Bible tells us to do. Now...

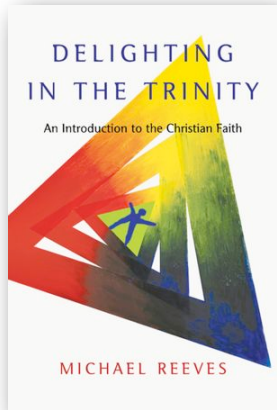
## Enjoy Jesus Together (Vision #2)

For this, we need to go to the source of our enjoyment: the identity of God Himself.

Genesis 1:26 (HCSB) "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image"

(Pray)

We're asking the question: what are the implications of the Trinity for how we *enjoy Jesus* book recommendation: *Delighting in the Trinity*, Michael Reeves.



## God made us in His image

But what does that mean?

He has certain attributes that are *incommunicable*: infinite, omniscient, omnipresent, unchangeable<sup>1</sup>  
But there are certain ways in which we are like him, and reflect him as image-bearers.

He has certain attributes that are *communicable*: wisdom, love, rational, vocation, consciousness...  
but there is something else at the core of His image...

## The God that Christians worship is Trinitarian

Tertullian coined the term "Trinity" in 3rd century to describe the identity of God saturating the Scriptures<sup>2</sup>

Jesus said to baptize converts in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Westminster Shorter Catechism<sup>4</sup> (17th century)

**Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?**

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Church wrestled for three centuries to articulate the Trinity though various heresies<sup>5</sup> **AP!**

- Arianism: Christ was created<sup>6</sup>
- Docetism: Christ wasn't human, but appeared to be so
- Nestorianism: Christ had a split identity
- Eutychianism: Christ was a hybrid

Athanasian Creed<sup>7</sup> (probably written around the 5th century<sup>8</sup>)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.

Why is the doctrine of the Trinity soooo important?<sup>9</sup>

Because everything good flows from God as Trinity: creation, salvation, relationship...

## God exists in relationship

Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image”<sup>10</sup>

There is a relational depth that God experiences in Himself! There has to be, right?

How can God be love<sup>11</sup> if He had to wait for us to exist to practice love?

- The Father gives love
- The Son is the object of that love
- The Spirit stirs up that love

So what does it mean to be made in God’s image?

## We were made for relationship

Genesis 2:18 (HCSB)

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement.”

Think about this! Though we were made for a divine relationship, God saw that divine relationship wasn’t enough...we were made for relationship with other image-bearers.

Our purpose for existence is to experience relational love.

How do we “Enjoying Jesus” in light of the image of God (Trinity)?

Enjoying Jesus takes place in the context of Christ-centered relationships

John 17:20-23 (HCSB)

I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in Me through their message. May they all be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You. May they also be one in Us, so the world may believe You sent Me. I have given them the glory You have given Me. May they be one as We are one. I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Individualism is not normative Christianity

though there are always extraordinary circumstances (persecuted church).

Just as God can only be who he is (love) in the context of relationship (in Trinity), so we can only be who we are (in His image) in the context of relationships.

But what kind of relationships should they be?

In the Trinity, we see a radical focus on the other.

- The Father tells us to look to and listen to His beloved Son
- The Son says to wait for the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is sent to glorify Jesus (humility)
- Jesus directs us to the Father's glory (deferment)

If relationships are modeled in the image of God, Christianity must be others-centered. If we are truly enjoying Jesus, it will be reflected in how we treat one another... And this is exactly what we see in the New Testament church...

## **Relational other-centeredness is "theological"<sup>12</sup> AP!**

- "...Be at peace with each other" (Mark 9:50)
- "...Wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)
- "...Love one another..." (John 13:34-35; John 15:12, 17)
- "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love..." (Romans 12:10)
- "Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10)
- "Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16)
- "...Stop passing judgment on one another" (Romans 14:13)
- "Accept one another as Christ accepted you..." (Romans 15:7)
- "...instruct one another" (Romans 15:4)
- "Greet one another with a holy kiss..." (Rom. 16:16; I Cor. 16:20, II Cor 13:12; I Thess. 5:26)
- "...Have equal concern for each other" (I Corinthians 12:25)
- "...Serve one another in love" (II Corinthians 13:12)
- "Carry each other's burdens..." (Galatians 6:2)
- "...Be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2)
- "Be kind and compassionate to one another..." (Ephesians 4:32)
- "...forgive each other..." (Ephesians 4:32)
- "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19)
- "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21)
- "...in humility consider others more important than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3)
- "Bear with each other..." (Colossians 3:13)
- "...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (Colossians 3:13)
- "...make your love increase and overflow for each other" (I Thessalonians 3:12)
- "Encourage one another" (I Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11; Hebrews 10:25)
- "...Build each other up..." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
- "Spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24)
- "...Do not slander one another" (James 4:11)
- "Don't grumble against each other" (James 5:9)
- "Confess your sins to each other..." (James 5:16)
- "...Pray for each other" (James 5:16)
- "...Love one another deeply, from the heart" (I Peter 1:22, 4:8)
- "...Live in harmony with one another..." (I Peter 3:8)
- "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (I Peter 4:9)
- "Serve one another" (I Peter 4:10)
- "...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another..." (I Peter 5:15)
- "Love one another" (I John 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11, 12; II John 5)

Position yourself to do this. **AP!**

1. be with other Christians
  - join a community group
  - live life with other Christians
    - are you discipling others?
    - are you being disciplined?
2. be with non-Christians too
  - don't turn into a holy huddle--do experience life together

Objection: Relationships are difficult! Especially with other Christians!

This is true...

- The best experiences we have are relational (love, laughter, sex, security)
- The worst experiences we have are relational (slander, slavery, adultery, betrayal)

Some of you have felt abandoned and hurt by others...by Christians

This is the result of sin in all of us<sup>13</sup>

This is why in our efforts to be relational, we resist the urge to make “community” our functional savior. *Instead of serving each another, we put impossible expectations on each other.* This is what serving false gods does--it crushes humanity.

We need a better savior than each other. And we have One in Jesus Christ, who came to reconcile bad relationships, starting with the one between us and God.

**Ephesians 2:12-14 (ESV)**

Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

Have you been hurt by others? Christ knows what you feel like. He's been there too. While being abandoned by or losing a loved one that you've known for many years is heartbreaking, it is infinitely more devastating what the Son of God felt when His Father--in perfect harmony with for all of eternity<sup>14</sup>--turned His face away from Him. Why? Because the Son of God was bearing the sins of the world<sup>15</sup>--the sins of our broken relationships, so that we might be reconciled first to Him<sup>16</sup>, and consequently, to each other.<sup>17</sup>

When you join a church (if you're a Xian, you do), you join a group of messed-up people. The tension: we are made for others-centered relationships, but we're all self-centered. :P

**The gospel gives us a future hope:** He will beautify everything that's ugly!

**Colossians 1:19-20 (HCSB)**

For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile everything to Himself by making peace through the blood of His cross—whether things on earth or things in heaven.

**The gospel gives us a present hope:**

Since you have been justified in Christ, you don't need the approval of anyone else  
You are freed to love others without needing them to return the favor.

That's a powerful force of reconciliation in a world that needs grace.

Our relationships become the launch pad for mission.

John 17:23 (HCSB)

I am in them and You are in Me. May they be made completely one, so the world may know You have sent Me and have loved them as You have loved Me.

The doctrine of the Trinity shows us that **the reason relationships exist, is because God cannot help but share His goodness with others. He made you to enjoy Him, and to enjoy Him with others.**

- <sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem lists all o the incommunicable and communicable attributes of God in *Systematic Theology. 1st Edition*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan and Intervarsity Press, 1994) 156-122
- <sup>2</sup> There are 106 passages in the New Testament that explicitly list all three Persons of the Godhead together. Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler. *Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2007). 55
- <sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:19
- <sup>4</sup> The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*. (Lawrenceville, GA: Christian Education and Publications, 2005)
- <sup>5</sup> It's important to note that the Church did not "invent" the concept of the Trinity; this doctrine emerges from the Scriptures; the Church simply articulates what the Bible describes, and given the complexity of the Trinity, this took several hundred years.
- <sup>6</sup> These various heresies from early church history are well documented in *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why it matters and what Christians believe*, edited by Ben Quash and Michael Ward. (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007)
- <sup>7</sup> Athanasian Creed. <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/athanasian.creed.html>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/40585/Athanasian-Creed>
- <sup>9</sup> For an introduction to Trinitarianism I highly recommend *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, by Michael Reeves. This is a short, easy read, yet it is packed with robust theology, sweeping views of Church History, and tangible application. I wrote an extensive book review of it here: <http://christopherlazo.com/2013/02/02/book-review-delighting-in-the-trinity-by-michael-reeves/>
- <sup>10</sup>R. Kent Hughes explains that there are a variety of viewpoints on why God spoke in the first person plural. One is to denote the angels, but as Hughes points out, this is impossible since angels are not made in God's image. Another view is that God is using the plural to speak of his majesty as ancient potentates were accustomed to doing, but this fails to account for the object of this passage--God is not talking about his majesty. The best interpretation of the first person plural for God is the ancient Trinitarian belief that he exists in community, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and was thus addressing himself. *Genesis: Beginning & Blessing*. (PTW; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004). 36
- <sup>11</sup> 1 John 4:8
- <sup>12</sup> This list was adapted from Britt Merrick's sermon *This is Reality: Relational*. 2.07.10. <http://vimeo.com/9282044>
- <sup>13</sup> Not the individual sin(s) that we carry out, but the condition of sin that taints everything we touch.
- <sup>14</sup> John 17:24
- <sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21
- <sup>16</sup> 1 Peter 3:18
- <sup>17</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19-20