

AUGUST 2016

TODAY IN THE WORD™



*The Holy Spirit descended on [Jesus] in bodily form like a dove.
And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love.”*

Luke 3:22

THE TRINITY IN THE GOSPELS

TODAY WITH DR. PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Global Ministries

Grasping the Infinite



Is it possible for a human being to understand God, to grasp the infinite? Just step outside on a dark night and gaze up at the stars. We can see only about 5,000 stars, but scientists estimate as many as a septillion stars exist in the visible universe, that's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. That's infinitely more than our minds can possibly comprehend.

In the same way, perfect, complete knowledge of God surpasses our ability to understand fully. Yet, grappling with the concept of His character as displayed in the Trinity is essential for the believer today.

Belief in the Trinity, the co-existent relationship of the three persons of God, distinguishes Christianity from other religions. Followers of Islam sharply criticize it, saying the Trinity denies the oneness of God. They ask, "How can One God be three distinct persons?" It is a worthy question, and I have yet to find a satisfactory illustration for the Trinity (such as the egg or ice). For me, they all fail to completely capture the unity that exists within the Godhead.

And, if you search for it, you will not find the word *Trinity* in Scripture. The

early church created this term to help us articulate the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yes, putting the mysteries of the Trinity into mere human words is like trying to hold the stars in our hands. But we learn important things, and we can know more about God by studying His three persons.

In the description of creation, we are introduced to the plurality of God's character, "Let us make man in Our image" (Gen. 1:26). The word translated here as "us," *Elohim*, is plural. Throughout Scripture, we see all three members of the Trinity. In the account of Jesus' baptism in the Gospels, all are present as Jesus is immersed in the water, the Spirit of God descends as a dove, and the voice of the Father speaks (see Matt. 3:16, 17).

Understanding the Trinity also helps us better understand who God created us to be. In Genesis 2:18, God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." Here God reflects His character in us. We are made in God's image, created to live in relationship. The three persons of God offer us a model of community, purpose, and love.

As John Calvin put it, "Without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self." The three persons of the Trinity reflect God's desire for us. ■

THEOLOGY MATTERS

by Dr. John Koessler

Shadows of the Trinity

The threefold nature of the one God is certainly revealed in the New Testament, and we have glimpses that foreshadow this truth in the Old Testament. One of the first hints of the Trinity comes from the plural form of the name of the God in the creation account in Genesis 1:3. This does not prove the doctrine of the Trinity, but it does provide our first glimmer of this aspect of God's being.

Another indication of the Trinitarian nature of God can be seen in the way that God's Spirit works throughout the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit does what only God can do. He is the agent of creation in Genesis (Gen. 1:2). He is both omniscient and omnipresent (Ps. 139:2–10). He is also the one who speaks through the prophets (Zech. 7:12).

The Old Testament also speaks of the mysterious figure called the Angel of Jehovah (Gen. 16:7–13). This being is distinguished from Jehovah, yet has the same power and is accorded the same reverence as Jehovah. Those who saw the Angel of Jehovah testified that they had seen God (Gen. 32:30; Hosea 12:3–4). The Angel of Jehovah—whom the New Testament reveals as Jesus—can forgive sin or refuse to forgive it (Ex. 23:20–21).

The Bible's doctrine of the Trinity is revealed progressively. What is only implicit in the Old Testament is explicit in the New Testament, where divinity is ascribed to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Old Testament does not reveal the doctrine of the Trinity through abstract propositions or theological statements but by action and ascription. The Father, Spirit, and Angel of Jehovah all do what only God can do. Each is treated with the regard that belongs to God alone.

The church began to use the term *Trinity* around the second century. In subsequent centuries, the church articulated more precise theology as it confronted inadequate views about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity.

The doctrine of the Trinity has implications for the church's communal life. What the Bible reveals about the Trinity not only shows us what God is like, it also shows us who we are. Through Christ we "are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). ■

FOR FURTHER STUDY

To learn more about the Trinity, read *Experiencing the Trinity: The Grace of God for the People of God* by Joe Thorn (Crossway).

FROM THE EDITORS

by Bruce Everhart

Wrong Address, Right Reader

God is using the ministry of *Today in the Word* to reach people, sometimes in unexpected ways! Sarah, one of our Donor Resource Management team members, regularly receives calls from people who are moving and need to change their address so that they can keep receiving their copy of *Today in the Word*. But sometimes the monthly devotional continues to arrive at their original address for the next few months while the postal service catches up with the address change. The new residents open their mailbox to find a copy of *Today in the Word* addressed to the previous occupant.

Some of these people have then contacted Sarah to ask if they can be added to the mailing list. They want to continue receiving this devotional that was originally sent to them by “mistake.” As you and I know, with our God there are no mistakes. This devotional that was intended for one person is now ministering to another. Isn’t it amazing how God can work—even through the tangle of red tape—to work His will in our hearts and lives!

It reminds me of a verse in Genesis where Joseph is reflecting on the twists and turns of his life, particularly the evil actions of his brothers. He says, “You intended to harm me, but God

intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (Gen. 50:20). What a wonderful God we serve, a God who is perfect in every way. What we may be tempted to view as a simple mistake might have been intended by God for good “to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

As you complete the study this month, will you join me in praying for the wide-reaching, life-changing ministry of *Today in the Word*? Please ask God to continue to use it to strengthen readers in their knowledge of His Word. Ask that God will extend the reach of this ministry and continue to use this devotional in unexpected ways. We desire to reach new readers who may have never experienced a personal relationship with our Savior.

Thank you for your financial support of this ministry. We depend on the contributions of every reader to underwrite the considerable expenses of producing this devotional. As you give to the ministry of *Today in the Word*, know that we consider you a partner in ministry, and you are helping men and women grow in the knowledge and grace of God and His Word that accomplishes His will in their lives. ■

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TODAY IN THE WORD™

The Trinity in the Gospels

Andrei Rublev, the 15th-century Russian artist, left us one of the most poignant representations of the mystery of the Trinity: his painting *The Trinity*, also called *The Hospitality of Abraham*. Currently in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, this jewel of Russian art shows the three angels who visited Abraham in his tent. Art historians and Bible scholars agree that these three angels reflect the triune God: “The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre” (Gen 18:1). Rublev’s masterpiece speaks to us through the centuries with the image of the angels’ silent peaceful communion, mutual love, unity, and humility.

The Gospel writers create a similar image. In our study this month, their Spirit-inspired words will speak to us about the Trinity and worship, the Trinity and truth, the Trinity and God’s gifts, the Trinity and the power of God, and more. And as we study various passages in the Gospels, we pray the Lord would draw us into communion with the Great I AM, and to each other through His Spirit—in love, unity, and humility.

Thank you for studying the Bible with *Today in the Word* this month! May we welcome the Lord into our homes and our hearts, as Abraham did near the oaks of Mamre. And may we rejoice in the union we have with God through Christ by His Spirit! ■

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MONDAY
AUGUST

1

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

Luke 1:15

The Trinity and the Mission of John the Baptist

The doctrine of the Trinity, God as Three-in-One, is one of the most difficult in Christian theology. John Wesley said, “Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show you a man that can comprehend the Triune God.” Though it is challenging, studying the Trinity can also be very rewarding. Augustine said, “There is no subject where error is more dangerous, research more laborious, and discovery more fruitful than the oneness of the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

This month’s study approaches this doctrinal topic within the four Gospels (mostly) and the life of Christ. In these familiar narratives, the Three-in-One often interact or are spoken about as identifiably different Persons. The goal of our study is to reach a richer and fuller understanding of God, including His love, His plan of salvation, and how the Trinity works in the world and in the lives of believers.

Our readings will begin in chronological order and then become organized thematically. August 1 to 10 will focus on the Trinity’s involvement in Christ’s birth. From August 11 to 20, the passages deal generally with the interaction and work of the Trinity. From August 21 to 31, the emphasis is on the Trinity’s roles with regard to redemption and the proclamation of the gospel.

In today’s reading, the three Persons of the Godhead are all involved. Zechariah offered incense in the temple to worship the Father (vv. 8–10), who sent an angel to him with an important message (v. 19). He and his wife would have a son who would prepare the way for the Messiah, the Son of God (vv. 16–17). This prophet, John, would be filled with the Holy Spirit throughout his life, beginning even before his birth (vv. 15, 41–45).

APPLY THE WORD

This month’s study provides an opportunity to discuss the Trinity with your pastor or other church leaders. What does your congregation’s doctrinal statement affirm about the Trinity? What biblical texts do they see as key in understanding it? Your small group Bible study or Sunday school class could also address this topic.

PRAY WITH US

Today starts the Employee Appreciation Week at Moody. Dr. Paul Nyquist, Moody’s president, asks you to join us by praying for all employees—those who work behind the scenes, those at the forefront of public ministry, and those in leadership.

The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.

Luke 1:35

TUESDAY
AUGUST

2

The Trinity and the Virgin Birth

The Creation account in Genesis connects God the Holy Spirit with the generation of life. In the beginning, before God spoke, when “the earth was formless and empty . . . the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (1:2). When God created the first man, Adam, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (2:7). In Hebrew, the same word is translated as both “breath” and “spirit,” indicating God’s ability to create a distinctive kind of life made in His image.

In today’s reading, we see that the Holy Spirit is the One who generated life in the womb of the virgin Mary (v. 35). Only God can do the impossible and bring life from nonlife. Just as He breathed human life into the dust of the ground, so also He conceived life in a virgin’s womb. God is the One who ultimately holds all power over life and death.

God the Father planned it all. His promises never fail (vv. 36–37)—one

of David’s descendants would be an eternal King (vv. 32–33). He sent an angel with a message to Mary; she responded differently from Zechariah, submitted obediently, and counted herself a recipient of God’s favor and blessing (vv. 28, 30, 38).

The baby to be born was, of course, Jesus, the Son of God (vv. 31–32)—the Messiah and the second Person of the Trinity. He is God Incarnate. Through the Son, the Father would fulfill His covenant with David. Christ—the Greek title that means “Messiah”—will reign forever and ever (see Rev. 11:15)!

By focusing on the Three-in-One in this episode, we gain a greater appreciation for God’s faithfulness, love, power, promises, plan of redemption, and sovereignty over life, as well as of the awe-inspiring mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus.

APPLY THE WORD

How can the first Person of the Trinity send the third to conceive the second as a human baby? Paradoxes like this are a mode of being beyond our understanding. Rather than be distracted by the mysteriousness of the Three-in-One, ask what God wants you to learn about Himself this month. Make this a topic for prayer today.

PRAY WITH US

As Employee Appreciation Week continues on Moody’s Chicago campus, we’d like to mention in prayer the staff of the Human Resources department headed by vice president Debbie Zelinski. We are grateful for all the effort they put into this event.

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST

3

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

Matthew 1:21

The Trinity and Joseph's Faith

What does it mean to say that God is a Trinity? One source offers a concise definition of this important doctrine: “The one God exists in three Persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one, yet self-differentiated; the God who reveals Himself to mankind is one God equally in three distinct modes of existence, yet remains one through all eternity.”

The Trinity is at the heart of the Christmas story. Just as all three Persons played distinctive roles in the lives of Zechariah and Mary, so also all three are present in the story of God’s intervention with Joseph. Intervention was needed because Joseph, as one might expect, just couldn’t believe his fiancée’s story of a virgin conception.

The Father once again sent an angel, this time in a dream, to tell Joseph it was true. Joseph responded in faith, which was consistent with his character.

He was, after all, faithful to the Law and a true worshiper of God. He received the angel’s message as authoritative because He knew that God had both the right and the power to do the impossible.

The angel also told Joseph that the baby in Mary’s womb was the Messiah, come to save people from sin (v. 21). More than that, He was Immanuel, “God with us,” the second Person of the Trinity (v. 23). God’s presence with His people always signifies His covenant faithfulness and love.

Mary’s pregnancy was the work of the Holy Spirit (v. 18). Since God is the great, self-existent I AM, it could not have been otherwise. This also fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy of a virgin birth (Isa. 7:14), which was authorized by the Father and inspired by the Spirit (v. 22). The entire Trinity participated in the birth of Christ—acting as separate Persons, but one in essence and purpose.

APPLY THE WORD

Many good theological sources are available to learn more about the Trinity. In addition to the recommendation in this month’s “Theology Matters” column, another brief article that covers basic biblical truths in a clear, concise manner is “What is the doctrine of the Trinity?” by Matt Perman, found on the Desiring God website.

PRAY WITH US

Your prayer support is important for the staff of our Event and Guest Services—Benjamin Jacobson, Anna Gonzalez, Amanda Privett, Hannah Morley, and Kevin Utecht—as they work on the logistics of every event hosted by Moody in Chicago.

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68

THURSDAY
AUGUST

4

The Trinity and Zechariah's Prophecy

The classic hymn, “All Creatures of Our God and King,” climaxes with praise to the Trinity: “All creatures of our God and King, / Lift up your voice and with us sing Alleluia! / . . . Let all things their Creator bless, / And worship Him in humbleness. / O praise Him! Alleluia! / Praise, praise the Father, Praise the Son, / And praise the Spirit, Three in One! / O praise Him! Alleluia!”

The Trinity is highlighted in Zechariah’s prophecy at the birth of his son, John the Baptist. After confirming the name John, Zechariah’s ability to speak (taken away by God as a result of his doubt-filled response in the temple), was restored to him. Filled by the Holy Spirit, he used his newly regained speech to praise God and to deliver an incredible prophecy (v. 67).

Most of Zechariah’s prophecy was not about his own son but rather about the son of Mary—the Son of God. Jesus

was God’s “horn of salvation” (v. 69), the literal embodiment of His long-promised plan of redemption. He was the “rising sun” dawning with God’s light for “those living in darkness and in the shadow of death” (vv. 78–79). He would guide sinners’ feet into the “path of peace” with God (see Rom. 5:10). Zechariah’s son, John, would be His forerunner, preparing the way with a call to repentance and forgiveness.

All of this was taking place according to the plan of God the Father. These events signified that “he has come to his people and redeemed them” (v. 68). In Christ, the Father fulfilled His covenants with David and with Abraham, as well as many prophecies. His “tender mercy” was the impetus for salvation (v. 78). Throughout his prophecy, Zechariah emphasized God’s strength, faithfulness, and especially His love.

APPLY THE WORD

Zechariah rejoiced because now God’s people would be enabled “to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness” (vv. 74–75). We can now serve and obey the Lord as we ought. Thanks to Jesus’ death and resurrection and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we can bring glory to God and devote our lives to serving and loving Him.

PRAY WITH US

Today we continue in prayer for Event and Guest Services and ask that you add Nathaniel Jacobs, Samuel Ju, Sonya Valeff, Stacey Craelius, and Teresa Mast to your list. We thank God for their contribution to the success of Moody’s conferences.

FRIDAY
AUGUST

5

*He was waiting for the consolation of Israel,
and the Holy Spirit was on him.*

Luke 2:25

The Trinity and the End of Waiting

Many have tried to understand the Trinity through analogy. Perhaps the Trinity is like a person's roles or relationships, as when one person is simultaneously a father, son, and friend. Perhaps it is like water, which can exist as gas, liquid, or solid. Or perhaps it is like an egg, which is one thing yet consists of a shell, yolk, and egg white.

These analogies are sometimes heretical and always inadequate. They cannot truly explain how God can be three Persons and yet one God. This divine mystery demands our faith even as we continue to seek understanding. That's how Simeon lived his life, and he was richly rewarded in today's reading.

Simeon had waited all his life for the coming of the Messiah, and God granted him the privilege of seeing Jesus in person before he died. The Holy Spirit was with Simeon and had revealed that this would be so. On that day, the Spirit

led him to a specific young couple in the temple courts (vv. 25–28).

Simeon took the incarnate Son of God in his arms and rejoiced! The Messiah had come; the time of waiting was ended! Jesus was God's salvation for "all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel" (vv. 29–32). Responding to Him, whether in acceptance or in rejection, would determine people's eternal destinies and relationship with God.

Mary and Joseph had come to the temple because God the Father had mandated that all firstborn sons be dedicated to the Lord (v. 23). This was a reminder of the nation's liberation from slavery in Egypt, the tenth plague, and the life-saving blood on the doorposts (see Exodus 13). Now God the Son fulfilled this symbolism—the first person to be perfectly consecrated to God and to live a perfectly holy life.

APPLY THE WORD

Simeon's meeting with Mary and Joseph (and that of Anna in verses 36 to 38) in the temple courts is an example of a "divine appointment." Mary and Joseph were surely surprised, but they responded with humble attentiveness and faith, just as we should when God brings people across our paths. Are we ready for our next divine appointment?

PRAY WITH US

Every ministry of Moody is supported by the hard work of the men and women in the Operations division headed by executive VP and chief operating officer, Steven Mogck. Please pray for good teamwork, collaboration, and God's guidance for this team.

*This is my Son, whom I love;
with him I am well pleased.*

Matthew 3:17

SATURDAY
AUGUST

6

The Trinity and the Baptism of Jesus

We believe, wrote fourth-century theologian Athanasius, “in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, and in one Holy Spirit; one God, known in the holy and perfect Trinity, baptized into which, and in it united to deity, we believe that we have also inherited the kingdom.”

At the baptism of Jesus, all three Persons of the Trinity were distinctly and powerfully present. Jesus, the Son, came to be baptized by John. This represented the climax of the Baptist’s ministry, though he hesitated (v. 14). After all, a sinless man did not need baptism to signify repentance from sin. Jesus, however, asked to be baptized to signify His consecration to the will of His Father and the launch of His public ministry (v. 15).

John, as we know, was filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth (see

Luke 1:15). It’s reasonable to infer that he knew his cousin’s true identity as the Messiah and Son of God through a revelation from the Spirit. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended “like a dove” (v. 16), a form symbolizing purity and innocence.

In addition, the voice of God the Father spoke from heaven: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (v. 17). Love is part of the inner life of the Trinity. Since love must have an object, from eternity there must have been Someone for God to love. In this sense, God being more than one Person was perhaps inevitable, though still mysterious.

On this occasion, alluding to Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, God publicly identified, affirmed, and encouraged His Son as He began His mission of redemption (see 1 John 4:8–9).

APPLY THE WORD

Before His ascension, Jesus instructed us to make and baptize disciples in the name of the Trinity (see Matt. 28:19). For the church, baptism signifies discipleship, a public commitment to following and obeying Christ. Baptism reminds us that we identify with the death and resurrection of our Lord and, like Him, are consecrated to doing the will of our Father.

PRAY WITH US

Today and tomorrow, please keep in prayer Moody’s Academic Records department. Thank God for the faithful service that Auctavia Cegers, Bethanne Tremper, David Thompson, and Elise Champanhet provide to our students.

SUNDAY
AUGUST

7

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1

The Trinity and the Temptation of Jesus

During Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, both He and Satan quoted Scripture. What made the difference?

Hermeneutics, a term meaning “interpretation.” Satan misrepresented Scripture’s meaning and tried to twist it to his own ends, while Jesus accurately and faithfully interpreted Scripture, remaining righteous and obedient. With the help of good biblical hermeneutics, He chose truth over falsehood and obedience over sin.

We might wonder why the Spirit led the Son into the wilderness for this important episode. Facing off against Satan was the other half of the launch of Jesus’ public ministry, the complement to the Father and Spirit’s affirmation at His baptism. This was not a one-time test, as the spiritual battle would continue throughout Jesus’ life (see Luke 4:13). Satan completely opposed Jesus’ mission of redemption, just as today he wars against God’s

work of salvation in our own lives (see 1 Peter 5:8).

We should be encouraged that Jesus faced temptation, just as we do (see Heb. 4:15). It’s particularly encouraging that He was led into this situation by the Holy Spirit, which meant it was not outside the will of God. We, too, should be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14). Even when confronting direct temptation by Satan and His own physical hunger, Jesus did not give in. He was instead filled with the Holy Spirit—again, just as we should be—and perfectly resisted Satan’s deceit.

Tellingly, God the Father is referenced in each of the three Scriptures quoted by Jesus. The Son trusted His Father’s words (v. 4). He would never attempt to manipulate Him or force His hand (v. 7). God alone is worthy of worship (v. 10). To bend the knee to any other, for any reason, would be faithless and sinful.

APPLY THE WORD

How can we fight against temptation like Jesus did? Like Him, we should know the Scriptures! Solid hermeneutics enables us to choose truth over falsehood and obedience over sin. We should also remember our identity in Christ and what it means—we are now free to resist sin and to live worthy of the gospel to which we have been called (see Eph. 4:1–6).

PRAY WITH US

Will you include in prayer the rest of the Academic Records staff? George Mosher, Julianne VanPeursem, Troy Dueck, and Tyrome Turner are grateful for your prayer support as they follow and document our students’ progress throughout their studies.

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.

John 3:35

The Trinity and the Testimony of John the Baptist

Election season is full of self-promotion. Candidates running for political office trumpet their positions and qualifications in order to persuade voters to support them. Their campaigns often also attack their rivals, both directly and indirectly. Humanly speaking, such strategies are in fact normal. People often seek competitive advantage at the expense of others.

John the Baptist's actions in today's passage run counter to this typical human behavior. Jesus had begun His public ministry and gathered some disciples. What did John think about that? He reminded his listeners that he had always said a greater One was coming (v. 28). In his metaphor, God's kingdom is a wedding, he is the best man, and Christ is the bridegroom (v. 29). The bottom line: "He must become greater; I must become less" (v. 30).

Jesus was the Son of God. He had come from heaven and had spoken with divine authority the very words of God. The Father loved Him and had delegated all authority to Him. Belief in Him is the gateway to eternal life. Significantly, the Father had given Jesus "the Spirit without limit" (v. 34). This reflects the essential unity of the Godhead—all three Persons are of one mind, equal in attributes, and speak and act as God (vv. 31–36).

John knew that his ministry mandate came from the Father, but unlike the ministry of the Son, his work was limited in scope and duration. To believe in the Father is to believe in the Son. The Father loved the Son, sent Him with the Spirit, and gave Him all authority. His wrath awaits whoever does not believe this, because not believing it is the same as calling God a liar (vv. 33, 36). God's wrath is aimed at sin and evil—He sent His Son to provide another way.

APPLY THE WORD

Do you believe in Jesus? Have you trusted in the Son for salvation? Have you rejoiced in the Father's plan of redemption and been sealed in the Spirit (see Eph. 1:13–14)? The three Persons of the Trinity loved you enough to make a way for you to escape God's wrath and spend eternity with Him. Will you accept this invitation and trust in Him today?

PRAY WITH US

Today, we would like to give our prayer support to the ministry of Dr. Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of Education. We ask for God's guidance and refreshing power in his leadership role of training future Christian leaders for global ministry.

TUESDAY
AUGUST

9

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.

Luke 4:18

The Trinity and the Fulfillment of Prophecy

The entire Trinity is involved in the work of salvation. As Philip Graham Ryken and Michael LeFebvre explain in *Our Triune God: Living in the Love of the Three-in-One*: “God plays the symphony of our salvation in three movements. Each movement is associated with a different Person of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. First, there is the work of God the Father in administering our salvation. The Father is the one who organizes and oversees the plan of salvation. Second, there is the work of God the Son in accomplishing our salvation. Jesus is the one who died on the cross for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life. Third, there is the work of God the Holy Spirit in applying our salvation. The Spirit is the one who takes what Jesus Christ has done and makes it ours. This is the plan, and the triune God has been working it out since before the beginning of time.”

We can see this beautiful truth in the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. Near the start of His public ministry, Jesus taught one Sabbath in His hometown synagogue in Nazareth. For the Scripture reading, He chose verses from Isaiah that described the Messiah as anointed by God, filled with the Spirit, and bringing good news of healing and freedom (vv. 18–19; Isa. 61:1–2). Stunningly, He then proclaimed, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21).

Jesus was filled with the Spirit (v. 14). He had been anointed by His Father and sent to bring the good news of salvation to a spiritually dead world. Miracles such as healing the blind helped validate His claims. He Himself was the fulfillment of the Father’s plan of redemption, and His arrival indeed heralded “the year of the Lord’s favor”!

APPLY THE WORD

Today, thank God—the Three-in-One—for the symphony of your salvation. Include thanks for His love that is the foundation for the work of salvation, the sovereign plan of the Father, the person and work of the Son, and the indwelling of the Spirit. Also ask God to show you how to live today in a way that reveals His love and salvation to others.

PRAY WITH US

Moody Theological Seminary has its open house, Next Step, today. While praying for future students who came to Chicago, also please mention professors who will teach them: Andrew Pfleiderer, Brad Baurain, Daniel Green, and David Woodall.

I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

Matthew 12:18

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST
10

The Trinity and Isaiah's Servant Song

After healing a lame beggar, Peter preached the gospel to the gathered crowd. In his sermon, he affirmed that God had planned everything Jesus had suffered. Furthermore, it had all been foretold and “promised long ago through his holy prophets,” going all the way back to His covenants with Moses and Abraham. God the Father was in sovereign control the entire time, and the entire Trinity is involved in the work of salvation (see Acts 3:11–26).

Again, this beautiful truth is revealed in a messianic prophecy of Isaiah. The Gospel of Matthew quoted from the first “Servant Song” (there are four altogether) in order to highlight again how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (vv. 18–21; see Isa. 42:1–4). In this passage, God the Father is speaking, describing His relationship with His Servant, who, as we now know, is Jesus, God’s Son. The relationship includes chosenness, love, delight,

and shared purpose. The Father is the planner and originator. Everything the Servant does is empowered by the Spirit and flows from the Father’s perfect intentions.

What does the Servant do? He reveals God’s heart by proclaiming justice and bringing hope to the nations. Somewhat unexpectedly, He is also described as gentle or quiet, a man of peace as opposed to the conquering ruler whom many Jews expected in Jesus’ day. Rather than seeking to organize a revolution against the Roman Empire, Jesus had compassion on the crowds and did miracles of healing (v. 15). Because He waited on the Father’s timing, He was not trying to amass followers, as the hostile Pharisees apparently assumed and feared. The Son’s ultimate role extends beyond Israel to the world, thus fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham (see Gen. 12:3). His name is the source of victory and hope!

APPLY THE WORD

Consider how we should follow the example of the Servant in Isaiah 58:6–8. Just as He proclaimed justice, we also should aim to “loose the chains of injustice.” Our acts of service to feed the hungry, to provide shelter for the homeless, and to advocate for the oppressed are acts of worship. When we show God’s love, our “light will break forth like the dawn”!

PRAY WITH US

Keeping the MTS professors in prayer, please add Deborah Gorton, James Coakley, and Julius Wong Loi Sing to your prayer list. We ask for God’s blessing on their ministry to students on our Chicago campus.

THURSDAY
AUGUST
11

*What do you think about the Messiah?
Whose son is he?*

Matthew 22:42

The Trinity and the Line of David

Math professor Richard Evan Schwartz authored a book about the numbers 1 to 100. It's called *You Can Count on Monsters*. Written for children, the book includes drawings of "monsters" representing prime or composite numbers and their factors. The composite monsters can be split into smaller ones, while the primary monsters are indivisible. The artwork and this creative approach make learning the math fun and engaging.

Jesus was also a highly creative teacher; for example, see His questions in today's passage. When the religious leaders tested Him, He responded with an answer and a question that demonstrated an Author's knowledge of God's Word.

To identify the greatest commandment was easy: everything is about wholeheartedly loving the Father and bringing Him glory (v. 37).

Then Jesus posed a puzzler for them: Whose son is the Messiah? (v. 42). He quoted Psalm 110—in which verses 1 and 4 are messianic prophecies—to give His listeners an opportunity to draw the conclusion that the Messiah is also the Son of God. Logically, how could a descendant of David also be David's Lord (v. 45)? That would only be possible if the descendant (the Messiah) were also God (the Son).

David spoke by the Spirit, so this psalm had to be true. Furthermore, for God to invite the Messiah to be seated at His right hand suggested a favored and even equal position. That would be possible only if both Father and Son were God. Ultimately, the first Person of the Trinity wins the victory on behalf of the second (see 1 Cor. 15:24–28). "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:9–10).

APPLY THE WORD

The fact that the Bible was inspired—or "breathed"—by God is grounds for our faith in its truthfulness. Inspiration makes it trustworthy and practical: the Word is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." How does Scripture help you to be "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16–17)?

PRAY WITH US

As we conclude our prayer time for the MTS professors, please uphold Ryan Cook, Sajan Matthews, John Trent, and William Thrasher. May the Lord grant them joy and satisfaction in their ministry and may they see lasting fruit in their students' lives.

*My Father is always at his work to this very day,
and I too am working.*

John 5:17

FRIDAY
AUGUST
12

The Authority of the Father and the Son

When God spoke to Moses in the burning bush and called him to liberate His people, Moses had some doubts and questions: “What is your name?” The Lord responded, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you’” (Ex. 3:14).

“I AM” is God’s name. Anyone using that name is declaring that he or she is God. In today’s reading, Jesus infuriated the Jewish religious leaders by claiming equality with God (v. 18). Though they refused to acknowledge His identity or the source of His authority, Jesus embraced their “accusation” as true and explained the all-encompassing authority and perfect unity existing between Himself and His Father.

The Father and Son are unified in will (vv. 19, 30), in love (v. 20), in power (vv. 21, 25–26), and in authority (vv. 22, 27).

The Son does not act as a maverick but does just as the Father does. The Father loves the Son and has fully revealed to Him His plan of salvation. God alone holds power over life and death, but that power belongs equally to the Father and the Son, revealing both to be God. Similarly, God alone has the authority to judge, but He has entrusted that prerogative to the Son, and expects everyone to honor and worship the Son equally with Himself (v. 23).

One result of this relationship is that it’s the Father’s will that all people should look to the Son for eternal life (v. 24; see John 6:40). The idea that God holds life and death in His hands includes not just power but also essence. That is, God is “life in himself” (v. 26)—a quality that the Father has granted to and shares with His only begotten Son.

APPLY THE WORD

We can rejoice in our certain hope of resurrection! We who trust in His name—the name of the One with resurrection power and all authority to judge eternal destinies—will rise to life, not through any merit of our own, but thanks to Christ’s redemptive sacrifice. Sing or listen to music that celebrates the resurrection today.

PRAY WITH US

Greg Thornton, senior vice president of Media, leads Moody Radio and Moody Publishers, and he welcomes your prayers for the talented and creative teams who serve God at these media ministries at Moody.

SATURDAY
AUGUST
13

No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Matthew 11:27

The Father Is Revealed in the Son

In *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts*, Trevor Hart wrote of the necessity of Christ becoming human: “[I]n order for God to transfigure our broken humanity it was necessary for him to lay hold of it in all its brokenness. . . . He redeemed it [our humanness] through a moment to moment Spirit-filled obedience, offering his humanity to his heavenly Father in a continuous sacrifice of praise and worship which culminated in the cross and resurrection.”

The Incarnation gives us a glimpse of the shared purpose of the Trinity, which is key to understanding Jesus’ mission of redemption. As He proclaimed in today’s reading, the Father is revealed in the Son. As John had reflected in the prologue to his Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). When “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John

1:14), it was the best possible revelation of God—because the Word was God!

The Father and the Son have perfect knowledge of one another. The Father reveals the Son to whomever He chooses, and the Son reveals the Father to whomever He chooses. Israel’s religious leaders were not included, for they had failed to respond in faith to clear signs that the Messiah had arrived. Jesus called a motley band of followers that included several fishermen and a tax collector!

Verses 28 to 30 are well known, but how do they connect in context to the Father-Son relationship? When the Father reveals the Son, and the Son reveals the Father, and we respond to God’s grace in humble faith. Note that this response gives us rest. God does not call us to achievement-driven anxiety or works-oriented legalism but to peace and calm.

APPLY THE WORD

Praying the words of Scripture can enrich our lives; people have prayed the psalms and other Scriptures for centuries. Beginning with Jesus’ prayer in verse 25, thank God for His self-revelation in His Son. Thank Him that you received His grace. And thank Him that salvation provides rest, peace, and assurance rooted in God’s love.

PRAY WITH US

Would you pray for the team at Moody Publishers that oversees production and customer service on Moody’s Chicago campus? Thank God for the faithful service of Ann Hackler, Carolyn McDaniel, Eddie Cuevas, Elizabeth Ireland, and Ryan Lloyd.

If it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matthew 12:28

SUNDAY
AUGUST
14

The Trinity and the Power of God

Reasonable Faith, an organization led by philosophy professor William Lane Craig, “aims to provide in the public arena an intelligent, articulate, and uncompromising yet gracious Christian perspective on the most important issues concerning the truth of the Christian faith today.” Through scholarly articles, podcasts, debates, videos, and social media, this organization uses reason and logic to support and defend God’s truth.

When the Pharisees accused Him of performing miracles and driving out demons by the power of Satan, Jesus used reason and logic to refute their claim and instead prove that His power and authority were divine. To drive out demons in Satan’s name was an absurd idea. Why would a kingdom fight against itself? But if Jesus did these miracles with the power of a different and greater kingdom—God’s kingdom—shouldn’t they be responding very differently?

Sadly, the Pharisees’ hypocritical hearts were spiritually closed. They were grasping at straws, trying to find a way to ignore the signs and to avoid admitting that Jesus was the Messiah. As He said, because they were not for Him, they were against Him.

The significance of their accusation, and of Jesus’ identity, is shown by the fact that He cited the other two Persons of the Trinity in His response. Jesus had come in His Father’s name. It is His kingdom Jesus proclaimed and His power by which Jesus did miracles of healing. When He drove out demons, it was by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees’ accusation was therefore against all three Persons of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit. To call the Son’s work, done in the Spirit on behalf of the Father’s kingdom, satanic? That’s a sin worthy of damnation (vv. 31–32)!

APPLY THE WORD

Many today are pursuing their own priorities with no thought for God’s kingdom or following Jesus. They might not understand our choices to bring glory to God through the ways we use our time, money, or energy. When you are questioned on these issues, remember that standing with God is the safest place to be!

PRAY WITH US

Pray for the staff of Moody Publishers’ Creative and Production—Erik Peterson, Josh Reigel, Judy Tollberg, Matthew Boffey, Randy Westerlund, and Sarah McCauley—as they serve the Lord through publishing Christian materials.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

by Dr. Michael Rydelnik, Professor of Jewish Studies and *Open Line* Host



What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

A The best definition is “control.” Jesus calls those who believe in Him to allow the Holy Spirit’s control of their lives. Ephesians 5:18 uses the contrast between wine and the Holy Spirit—rather than be controlled (“drunk”) with wine, we should be controlled (“filled”) with the Spirit. Moreover, the Bible uses the same meaning of the word *filled* in other contexts. For example, Luke 5:26 speaks of people being “filled with fear” or being controlled by fear. Acts 19:28 describes people as “filled with rage,” meaning they are controlled by anger. The command to be filled with the Holy Spirit means that we are to be controlled by Him.

The real question is not what does it mean but how do we obey? We find the answer in Colossians, a book with a similar structure to the book of Ephesians. Colossians 3:16, a parallel passage to Ephesians 5:18, has a command followed by similar outcomes. In both passages, the results of obeying the command are worship, thanksgiving, and wholesome household relationships. But the command in Colossians 3:16 is different: “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly.” The word *dwell* was used

of Roman troops forcibly occupying a conquered city. Therefore, the parallel command calls us to allow God’s Word to take forcible occupation of our lives. We do this by reading, studying, meditating upon, and obeying God’s Word. The results will be the same as the results of being filled with the Spirit. When God’s Word takes forcible occupation of our lives, we are controlled by the Holy Spirit.



Do Jewish people and Christians worship the same God?

A It appears that according to the New Testament, the object of Jewish worship is the same as Christian worship. Four passages support this idea. First, in Acts 22:3, Paul tells a Jewish crowd, “I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.” By saying that he was “zealous for God” just as they were, Paul indicates that both he and the Jewish crowd worship the same God.

Second, in Acts 24:15 Paul says of those Jewish people who accused him of wrongdoing, “And I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” Paul believes that God will raise the dead

Mountain-moving prayer is a privilege given to all followers of Jesus who will trust God wholeheartedly.

and that his Jewish accusers share the same hope in God. Third, in Acts 26:6–7, Paul says to the Jewish King Agrippa, “And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night.” The word *serve* in this passage is a biblical word for “worship.” It is speaking of the God who made a covenant with Abraham, and it clearly states Jewish people worship Him.

Finally, in Romans 10:2, having expressed compassion for his Jewish brothers who didn’t yet believe Jesus as the Messiah, Paul says, “They are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.” The word *zeal*, meaning “passionate activism,” indicates that Jewish people share Paul’s heart for the same God. This verse also indicates that Jewish people worship the same God but have an incomplete view of Him—it is not according to knowledge.

The Bible makes it clear that this incomplete knowledge leads to incomplete worship. Therefore, in Romans 10:1 Paul says his heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Jewish people is that they might be saved. Jewish people worship the same God, but they still need to know Jesus, and

experience forgiveness by believing in Him. We must pray for them and tell them lovingly the good news that the Messiah of Israel has come, and that He is Jesus of Nazareth.

Q In the Gospel of Mark, why did Jesus curse the fig tree if it was not the season for figs?

A The cursing of the fig tree was not a vindictive or selfish act but rather an illustration for two spiritual lessons. The first was about the danger of religious hypocrisy: Jesus showed that the temple had become a place of business operations, not a place of worship (Mark 11:17–18). Just as the tree had leaves but no fruit, so the religious leadership looked holy but did not produce spiritual fruit. This kind of religiosity would wither, even as the fig tree did.

The second lesson was about prayer. Jesus caused the tree to wither as a result of prayer, and not because He exercised His power as the Son of God. When the disciples were amazed that the fig tree had withered already, Jesus taught them that they too could pray, and if they believed, they could move mountains (Mark 11:22–24). Mountain-moving prayer is a privilege given to all followers of Jesus who will trust God wholeheartedly.

MONDAY
AUGUST
15

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

The Son Is the Way to the Father

Many people today say they are spiritual but not religious. The positive side of this is that they recognize that people are more than just material or physical beings. The negative side is that they tend to focus on their personal feelings or emotions, either rejecting the idea of absolute truth or reserving for themselves the right to pick and choose what those truths might be. Such people essentially put themselves in the place of God.

By contrast, Jesus proclaimed a truth that grates on the ears of modern spirituality: He and He alone is the way to the Father. John 14, where we'll spend three days, is part of the Upper Room discourse, Jesus' teaching following the Passover or Last Supper prior to His crucifixion. In today's reading, He comforted His disciples with a promise. He was going to His

Father's house to prepare a place for them (vv. 2–3).

How close is the relationship between the Father and the Son? "No one comes to the Father except through me" (v. 6). To believe in the Son is to believe in the Father (vv. 1, 11). To know the Son is to know the Father (vv. 7, 9). The words and work of the Son are the words and work of the Father. They are "in" one another—utterly unified as Persons of the Godhead (v. 10). The Father's power—the gift of the Holy Spirit is implied here and explicitly revealed in the verses following—will also be available to the followers of the Son (v. 12).

The Father sent the Son and the Son reveals the Father. The incarnate Son is the one and only way the Father has made for us to come to Him. Faith in Christ alone is the way to salvation!

APPLY THE WORD

This passage provides us with some practical encouragement for our prayers. We are to pray to the Father in the name of the Son, for His glory, and we have direct access to God's power through the indwelling of the Spirit (vv. 13–14). Praying for God's will to be done is a prayer that is always answered "yes" (see Matt. 6:10).

PRAY WITH US

Edgar Santiago, Harrison Gunter, Jeffrey Reynolds, Jonathan Swanson, Richard Peterson, and Susan Malnati serve diligently overseeing Moody Publishers' finances. They will be grateful for your prayers today!

*I am in my Father, and you are in me,
and I am in you.*

John 14:20

TUESDAY
AUGUST
16

The Trinity and the Promise of the Spirit

Jonathan Edwards, the great eighteenth-century American pastor and theologian, wrote of the Trinity and salvation: “So that it is God of Whom our good is purchased and it is God that purchases it and it is God also that is the thing purchased. Thus all our good things are of God and through God and in God. . . . All our good is of God the Father, it is all through God the Son, and all is in the Holy Ghost as He is Himself all our good. God is Himself the portion and purchased inheritance of His people. Thus God is the Alpha and the Omega in this affair of redemption.”

Jesus’ promise to send the Holy Spirit was another essential step in God’s “affair of redemption.” It again demonstrates how the Trinity are interrelated: The Father sends the Spirit (v. 16), confirming what we have already seen of His role as source,

planner, or originator of salvation. The Son requests the Father to send the Spirit in order to empower His followers to carry forward the gospel, confirming His role as the accomplisher of salvation. The Spirit is sent by the Father at the Son’s request in order that Christian believers might live obedient lives worthy of the gospel, confirming His role as enabler of salvation.

This passage also shows us that the Son abides in the Father, just as we abide in Christ (v. 20; see John 15:4–5). The Son’s words are the Father’s words. To obey Jesus’ commands is to be loved by both Father and Son (vv. 15, 21, 23). The best evidence of divine love is the sending of the Spirit. He grounds us in truth and is our advocate or helper in living it out (vv. 16–18).

APPLY THE WORD

David prayed that he would “dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life” (Ps. 27:4). Jesus delivers the answer to that longing. He promised that He and the Father would come to believers and “make our home with them” (v. 23). Even while we wait for the fullness of dwelling with God for eternity, we have His presence with us now!

PRAY WITH US

New and returning students are arriving on the Spokane, WA, campus today and on the Chicago campus tomorrow after their summer break. Ask the Lord to guide and strengthen them throughout their years of training for ministry.

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST
17

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things.

John 14:26

The Trinity and the Mission of the Spirit

Human memories are not reliable. We might think we remember what happened, or we equate our own interpretation of events with the truth. We might forget inconvenient facts. Our memories are finite and fallible—and very often self-serving as well!

In today's reading, Jesus promised His disciples that their eyewitness memories would be assisted and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (v. 26). This means the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ are trustworthy beyond anything based on merely human memory. We can believe He really said the words and did the actions we read in Scripture. God has made sure that His revelation of Himself in Christ is recorded in a wholly true and accurate way.

This is one reason the Spirit was sent by the Father at the request of the Son.

As we saw yesterday, the Spirit has come to be our advocate or helper, to indwell and empower us for holy lives (vv. 16, 26). He will be with us forever (v. 17), working out the truth of the gospel in our lives and in the world.

What else do we learn about the Trinity in this passage? The Father is "greater" than the Son in the sense that He is the originator or planner of salvation (v. 28). The Son will obey the Father "to the point of death," demonstrating complete love and submission (v. 31). In the face of the news of His impending death, however, Jesus also comforted His disciples with the news that He will come again (v. 28). Before that day, Satan will cause suffering and try to oppose the gospel, but he will fail, and Christ will complete His victory over the "prince of this world" (v. 30).

APPLY THE WORD

Go back through John 14 and make a list of the blessings that we are promised through the Trinity. Examples include an eternal dwelling with God, the love of God, and peace that transcends the world's understanding. As you review your list, praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for His inexhaustible supply of good gifts in your life.

PRAY WITH US

Collin Lambert, VP of Moody Radio, welcomes your prayers. With 37 owned and operated radio stations, six Internet stations, and hundreds of affiliates, our programs bring the message of Christ to listeners in the U.S. and around the world.

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father . . . he will testify about me.

John 15:26

THURSDAY
AUGUST
18

The Trinity and the Work of the Spirit

In God's Prayer Book: *The Power and Pleasure of Praying the Psalms*, Ben Patterson explains prayer in light of the Trinity: "The organic union of the Body of Christ is rooted in the loving union of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Together, the 'community' of God helps us pray. In fact, we are drawn up into the communion of the Godhead when we pray. Jesus, the Son, teaches us to pray to the Father and intercedes for us as we do. The Spirit also helps us to pray, as something of a translator [Rom. 8:26]."

Praying with us is part of the Spirit's work. Today's passage describes His work even more fully. When He comes, the "Advocate" or "Spirit of truth" (15:26) will, in addition to His work in the church and in individual believers, undertake three main tasks in the world (16:8–11). First, He will prove the world wrong about sin. Unbelievers don't think they're so bad. They don't like the

idea that they stand condemned and need a Savior. But the Spirit convicts them of their sinfulness and of their urgent need for God's great love, shown in the gift of His Son.

Second, the Spirit will prove the world wrong about righteousness. Unbelievers think their own goodness is enough. Don't they do their best? Are they really so bad? But the Spirit teaches them that their own self-righteousness is entirely inadequate. For eternal life with God, we need the redemption and righteousness of Christ.

Finally, the Spirit will prove the world wrong about judgment. Unbelievers are living according to the world, a system which seems normal and fine to them, but which is satanic and puts them in danger of hell. The Spirit can show them Christ, the only way to life.

APPLY THE WORD

Just as part of the Spirit's work is to testify about Christ, so also is it part of our work (15:27). What's your testimony? Through what faith-building stories have you testified recently to the work of God in your life? And when you talk about such things, is the focus on you or on God? Rejoice in the privilege of telling what God has done!

PRAY WITH US

Over one million people listen to Moody Radio stations weekly, and more tune to the Internet channels and affiliates. Thank God for Radio Marketing's George Economos, Michael Chapin, Hannah LaMaster, David Woodworth, and Cody Fraser.

FRIDAY
AUGUST
19

*When he, the Spirit of truth, comes,
he will guide you into all the truth.*

John 16:13

The Trinity and Truth

According to theologian Peter J. Leithart, the term *perichoresis*, which means “mutual indwelling,” is used to describe the interrelationships and the inner life of the Trinity; that is, the love and unity that characterize the Three-in-One. He also suggests that since “created things were intended to communicate something about God . . . we might discover perichoretic fingerprints—traces of the Trinity—throughout the creation.”

Another theological term for this is *circumincession*, defined as “the reciprocal existence in one another of the three Persons of the Trinity.” Though impossible for us to understand completely, this doctrinal term helps us to grasp the point of today’s reading. Jesus said that when the Spirit comes, His words would not be His alone but also the words of the Father and the Son (v. 13). This again confirms the essential unity and mutual indwelling of

the Three-in-One. They have one will and speak with one voice.

Specifically, the Spirit receives from the Son what He will make known to the disciples and to us (v. 14). In doing so, He glorifies the Son, which is exactly in line with the rest of His ministry. Furthermore, the Father has made all that belongs to Him the Son’s as well. Since He is the sovereign Lord, everything does belong to Him, including words (v. 15). Therefore, the words of truth from the Spirit ultimately come from the Father and the Son as well. This is why the church’s ministries of preaching and teaching the Word can be effective only by the Spirit.

As quickly as we have differentiated the three Persons of the Trinity and their respective roles in the work of salvation, just as quickly must we reaffirm their essential unity and shared divine attributes. “Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?” (Ps. 89:8). No one!

APPLY THE WORD

To help our finite minds better understand the Trinity, theologians create terminology, artists paint masterpieces, and poets craft sonnets. One powerful example is “Sonnet XIV” from the *Holy Sonnets* by John Donne, which begins, “Batter my heart, three-person’d God; for you / As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend.”

PRAY WITH US

Radio Moody is growing, with five Spanish-language AM stations and two affiliate stations. We ask that you give your prayer support to Radio Moody’s staff, Elsa Mazón, Gerson García, and Yahir Vergara, as they reach our Spanish-speaking audience.

The true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth.

John 4:23

SATURDAY
AUGUST
20

The Trinity and Worship

In the article “Love the Lord with All Your Voice,” theology professor Steven R. Guthrie argued that singing should be regarded as a “spiritual discipline—an important practice in Christian spiritual formation, and a means of growing in the life of faith.” Rather than being an act of expression, worshipful singing begins as an act of imitation; for example, by learning to sing the psalms until their words become our own.

Just as the entire Trinity is involved in the gospel and its proclamation, so also is the entire Trinity involved in worship. We see this in today’s reading, which is part of the well-known narrative of Jesus’ encounter with the woman at the well. She might have raised the topic of where to worship as a distraction, since it was a known bone of contention between Jews and Samaritans. But Jesus, as He always did, took the opportunity to say something worthwhile and redemptive.

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in the Spirit and in truth” (v. 24). God is the only worthy recipient of our worship, including all three Persons of the Trinity. The Spirit Himself enables our worship, which must be coupled with truth, that is, with the revelation of God in Christ. We cannot make God in our image, though many today try.

Interestingly, Jesus identified Himself directly here as the Messiah (v. 26), seemingly the only time He did so prior to Passion Week. This might be because the Samaritans, who accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture, did not have the same political messianic expectations as the Jews did because they did not know messianic prophecy. Though she lacked both status and access to all the Jewish Scriptures, Jesus revealed more about His identity to this sinful Samaritan woman—and her life was transformed.

APPLY THE WORD

Hopefully tomorrow you will have the opportunity to sing praise to God—but you don’t have to wait for a church service! Even those of us who can’t carry a tune can still bring glory to God through musical praise. In response to the Trinity’s transforming power through the gospel, take time today to worship through song.

PRAY WITH US

Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, leads his teams in consistent pursuit of faithful stewardship, so that every gift to Moody is utilized with maximum efficiency. Ask the Lord to grant him wisdom and insight in dealing with financial matters.

SUNDAY
AUGUST
21

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:2

The Trinity and the Sending of the 72

In recent years, Middle Eastern Christians have suffered intense persecution. *The Week* reported that in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, believers “are murdered in mob violence or by militant groups. Their churches are bombed, their shops destroyed, and their homes looted. Laws are passed making them second-class citizens, and the majority of them eventually leave.”

Christ told His followers to expect persecution (see John 15:20). Suffering is part of being entrusted with the gospel. In today’s reading, Jesus sent out seventy-two of His followers with the good news of the kingdom. Since the table of nations in Genesis 10 lists seventy-two entries, some scholars think this number might symbolize the global scope of God’s plan. Jesus warned these followers that they were going out as sheep among wolves, and some people would greet them with hostility (vv. 3–12).

Despite any opposition they had faced, the seventy-two had returned with a successful ministry report. In the name and with the power of Jesus, they had cast out demons and done other miracles (vv. 17–19). They were not to take pride in this, because it was all the work of God, but rather to rejoice with eyes of faith (vv. 23–24).

The Son set the example for them by praising the Father in the joy of the Spirit (v. 21). The message had gone out and God had been glorified! Eternal life (having one’s name written in heaven) cannot be gained through human wisdom or power but only through the Son and His perfect revelation of His sovereign Father. As two Persons but one in essence, the Father and the Son have perfect knowledge of one another and the perfect plan to show God’s love to the nations (v. 22).

APPLY THE WORD

Faced with the power of God, Satan is helpless. In this spirit—in the Spirit—pray for the persecuted church around the world. Ask that these believers would be given “authority to trample on snakes and scorpions” (figures of speech for demons and evil spirits) and opportunities to continue to spread the good news of the kingdom.

PRAY WITH US

Thank the Lord for the service of Nancy Hastings, executive director of the Alumni Association, and project coordinator Diane Janchenko, who keep alumni connected to Moody and to each other with events, alumni reunions, and *Alumni News*.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.

Matthew 10:16

The Trinity and the Sending of the Twelve

Believers around the world today are suffering for the sake of the gospel. *The Spectator*, a British publication, called it “the war on Christians.” They reported that the secular International Society for Human Rights estimates that 80 percent of all acts of religious discrimination globally are directed at Christians. Each year for the decade preceding 2013, an average of 100,000 Christians were martyred—that’s eleven Christians every hour of every day.

No wonder Jesus said He was sending His followers out as “sheep among wolves” (Matt. 10:16)! As in yesterday’s devotion, in today’s reading we see the entire Trinity involved in spreading the good news of the kingdom. The sending of the Twelve, unlike the sending of the 72, was limited to the Jews (vv. 5–8), not because God’s love excluded Gentiles (see v. 18) but simply because “the lost sheep of Israel” were to hear first (see Rom. 1:16).

The Father is involved because the “kingdom of heaven” is His kingdom. The promises being fulfilled are His promises. The day of judgment that awaits unbelievers is His day of judgment. The Spirit is involved because He was sent by the Father. He will give faithful believers wisdom about what to say when they are persecuted (vv. 16–20). And the Son is involved, of course, because He Himself is the promised Messiah. With this mission, He was training His twelve disciples in proclaiming the kingdom, trusting God and God’s people to provide, and facing opposition (vv. 9–15).

Bearing witness to the kingdom was and is more important than mere safety. The Good Shepherd sends us, too, out as faithful sheep among the wolves of the world. Thankfully, we, too, can rely upon the Spirit of our Father to speak through us!

APPLY THE WORD

As we pray for the persecuted church around the world, consider joining with a prayer partner to intercede for believers who are oppressed. Just as Jesus’ followers were sent out in pairs, praying with a partner can be encouraging and powerful. “For where two or three gather in my name,” Jesus said, “there am I with them” (Matt. 18:20).

PRAY WITH US

Fall semester begins today at Moody. As our students fill the classrooms, please pray for their professors in the Communications department: Rosalie de Rosset, Jill White, Brian Kammerzelt, and David Fetzer.

TUESDAY
AUGUST
23

How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Luke 11:13

The Trinity and God's Gifts

When we call God “Father,” we associate that term with “affection and authority,” according to author Ben White. But this would have been countercultural in the New Testament world. In the Roman Empire, fathers played virtually no part in parenting, infanticide was practiced regularly, and men ruled their families as absolute tyrants, including owning all property and having the right to make or break children’s marriages.

In other words, White says, “The New Testament authors portray God the Father as radically unlike Roman fathers.” When we as God’s children pray to Him, then, we are not praying to a romanticized version of a human father but to a far superior Father. If even human fathers normally do the right thing by their children, how much more so will God (vv. 11–13)? Or if even a grumpy person for whom it is inconvenient will give a friend bread

because of that friend’s tenacity, how much more so will God (vv. 5–8)? He has none of the sinfulness that causes human fathers to sometimes wrong their children or friends to sometimes act selfishly.

In today’s passage, Jesus taught His disciples about prayer, mainly highlighting the need for boldness and persistence. To say, “Ask and it will be given to you,” was not a blank check for getting our own wishes and desires. Rather, Jesus meant that prayer is how we seek to align our wills with God’s will, and when that happens our prayers will be granted. His ways are higher, His plans are better, and one day we’ll see that all His answers to our prayers were best.

The third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is described here as an answer to prayer (v. 13). To those who ask, God gives the best gift of all—Himself.

APPLY THE WORD

Ask the Spirit to help you to reflect on your prayer life. In verse 9, the imperative verbs imply a continuous action: “Keep on asking,” “Keep on seeking,” and “Keep on knocking.” A prayer request is not a one-time event; instead, prayer is a spiritual habit or discipline, a way of life. That’s how Paul could exhort us to “pray continually” (1 Thess. 5:17).

PRAY WITH US

The Convocation service begins today on our Chicago campus, an important landmark in the beginning school year, and we continue in prayer for the Communications professors—Karyn Hecht, Kelli Worrall, Robert Gustafson, and Janay Garrick.

*The words I have spoken to you—
they are full of the Spirit and life.*

John 6:63

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST
24

The Trinity and the Challenge of Discipleship

New Testament scholar D. A. Carson described what it means to be a disciple of Christ: “Such Christians refuse to rob their employers by being lazy on the job, or to rob their employees by succumbing to greed and stinginess. They are first to help a colleague in difficulty, last to return a barbed reply. They honestly desire the advancement of the other’s interests, and honestly dislike smutty humor. Transparent in their honesty and genuine in their concern, they reject both the easy answer of the doctrinaire politician and the *laissez-faire* stance of the selfish secular man. Meek in personal demeanor, they are bold in righteous pursuits.” These “norms of the kingdom, worked out in the lives of the heirs of the kingdom, constitute the witness of the kingdom.”

Today’s reading was a watershed moment. Those following Jesus did not

respond well to His difficult teaching about salvation (vv. 51–59). Many grumbled, felt offended, and rejected it, as Jesus had known they would. Some abandoned Him, while the Twelve made a more definitive commitment to discipleship (vv. 60–69).

The Trinity is key to discipleship. We follow Jesus, the Son, the One who has the words of eternal life. He is truly the “Holy One of God” (v. 69). The Spirit is the One who gives life. And the Father is the One who enables us to recognize these truths and to believe. Salvation cannot be earned, it is the gift of God—of all three Persons of the Trinity. There is no other basis for discipleship! It is not a “work” we can do in our own strength. If, in this sense, we refuse to “eat” Christ’s flesh and “drink” His blood, we are refusing God Himself.

APPLY THE WORD

In your own spiritual history, what “crossroads moments” can you identify? As you reflect on them, can you see the hand of the Trinity at work? In what ways have the Father, Son, and Spirit enabled and empowered you for obedient discipleship? Give thanks for God’s love and grace today!

PRAY WITH US

Bruce Everhart, VP of Donor Development and Channel Strategy, leads Moody’s outreach to our supporters. Ask God to bless them with a strong commitment and friendship with our constituents under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

THURSDAY
AUGUST
25

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

John 20:21

The Trinity and the Commissioning of the Twelve

Early on the Sunday morning following Christ's crucifixion, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and found the stone rolled away. She reported this to Peter and John, who ran there and found no body, only empty grave clothes. They were puzzled and fearful. What happened? Would they be blamed for the missing body? Would they be arrested and executed?

Over time, the incredible truth dawned on them. Jesus had risen from the dead, just as He said! He appeared to them, ate with them, and spoke with them (v. 19). He showed them His crucifixion scars (v. 20). The Son now possessed a glorified body—as we will also one day (see 1 Cor. 15:20)—that could do things like pass through locked doors, but it was still identifiably His body. He understood the disciples' state of mind and gently transformed their feelings from fear to joy.

Christ also gave them a task infused by the Trinity. They were to go forth with the message of the gospel. As the Father had sent the Son to accomplish redemption, so the Son now sent them to spread the news of God's love (v. 21). They would do with God's strength—Jesus "breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (v. 22). This was a foretaste of Pentecost, the full anointing of the Spirit that came fifty days after Jesus' ascension.

He also gave them the authority to speak in His name (v. 23). This verse does not imply that we cause God to forgive or not forgive. The Greek verb actually indicates that the forgiveness has already taken place. It means that to proclaim the gospel is to participate in God's work of redemption, in which forgiveness of sin is crucial.

APPLY THE WORD

How are we as followers of Christ participating in the spread of the good news of the gospel? We should all testify to God's work of salvation. Whether witnessing to a neighbor, praying for missionaries, or serving in a church outreach, we have an amazing privilege of following the command of Christ and participating in God's desire to share His love with all people.

PRAY WITH US

Pray for the staff of Moody Radio's WGNR, broadcasting in Indiana, and thank God for the listeners who are encouraged and strengthened by Ray Hashley, Tom Winn, Nancy Graves, Linda Yeager, Kelli Thompson, and Darcey Christianson.

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

FRIDAY
AUGUST
26

The Trinity and the Great Commission

In the late 1700s, many Christians saw world evangelism as God's business, not theirs. In response, a young English minister named William Carey wrote a tract arguing that all Christians in all eras of history should obey the Great Commission. He then sailed for India, where he spent his life in the service of the gospel. Today he is credited with launching the modern missionary movement.

The Great Commission makes clear the missionary responsibility of the church, and it puts it clearly in the context of our Triune God. The disciples were commanded to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (vv. 19–20). This divine, authoritative mandate came directly from God the Father via God the Son.

Realistically, the disciples were not represented in this passage as a crack team of evangelists. Very properly, they worshiped the risen Christ, but it also says that “some doubted” (v. 17). Faith isn’t instantaneous; it takes time to grow. Making disciples, not just converts, is a time-consuming process. The faith that saves is just the start of how God wants to transform our lives!

Most significantly, Jesus promised, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The tone is reminiscent of Moses addressing the Israelites before his death: “Be strong and courageous . . . for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31:6). Though ascending to the Father, Jesus—God the Son and “God with us”—did not leave His church alone. He has promised to be with us throughout this present age!

APPLY THE WORD

Consider how you can be involved with missions. The Lord might call you to serve Him in a different cultural context, or perhaps share your gifts of financial or prayer support. Missionaries appreciate gifts of encouragement through email and remembered birthdays. And mission organizations need the gifts of organization.

PRAY WITH US

Moody Radio’s WDLM started broadcasting in 1960 in Illinois and Iowa, receiving D. L. Moody’s initials as call letters. Ask the Lord to bless the service of Jason Crosby, Deborah Gustafson, and Ken Brooks who continue to build on WDLM’s great legacy.

SATURDAY
AUGUST
27

No one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

John 3:5

The Trinity and Spiritual Rebirth

Seventeenth-century Puritan pastor John Owen noted that the Bible teaches with regard to the Holy Spirit “that he will come unto us, that he will be our comforter, that he will teach us, lead us, guide us; that he spoke of old in and by the prophets, that they were moved by him, acted by him; [and] that he ‘searcheth the deep things of God.’” Therefore, “we must acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be a substance, a person, God; yet distinct from the Father and the Son.”

Spiritual rebirth is a work of the Holy Spirit, made possible by the Son, and planned and presided over by the Father. The entire Trinity is integrally involved in the work of salvation. We’ll conclude our study with five days to focus on this topic, beginning with today’s reading in John 3 and then moving beyond the Gospels to explore more fully the Trinity’s roles in redemption.

Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of the necessity of being “born again” or “born from above” or “born of the Spirit” (vv. 3, 5). His explanation of what this means involved the entire Trinity. Spiritual rebirth is a requirement for entering the Father’s kingdom. It is a work of the Holy Spirit (vv. 5–8). And the Son knows how it all works because He accomplished it via His death and resurrection.

The phrase “born of water and the Spirit” likely indicates a natural birth (water) then a supernatural birth (Spirit). In verse 6, “Flesh gives birth to flesh” (natural) but “the Spirit gives birth to Spirit” (supernatural). He, as only God can, changes death (where natural birth inevitably leads) into life. The wind metaphor in verse 8, in addition to highlighting God’s glorious sovereignty and mystery, reminds us of His creation and life-giving breath (see Gen. 2:7).

APPLY THE WORD

The Gospel of John intentionally echoes and builds on the opening chapters of the book of Genesis to reveal more of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When you have time for additional Bible study, read the first three chapters of Genesis and the first three chapters of John, and make notes about themes you see repeated.

PRAY WITH US

Please pray for Frank Leber, VP of Information Technology Services, and the teams he leads. Due to their daily diligent work, Moody has a well-maintained network of computers that enhances the ministry of every department.

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:33

SUNDAY
AUGUST
28

The Trinity and God's Plan of Redemption

A classic hymn prays: “O holy, blessed Trinity, / Divine, eternal Unity, / O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, / This day your name be uppermost. . . . / My Maker, hold me in your hand; / O Christ, forgiven let me stand; / Blest Comforter, do not depart, / With faith and love enrich my heart.”

All three Persons of the Trinity play their role in the believer’s salvation and daily spiritual life. On the day of Pentecost, Peter declared God’s eternal plan of redemption, including the involvement of the entire Trinity (vv. 30–36). Jesus, the Son, was the man they had recently seen arrested and crucified. He was in fact God’s promised Messiah, from the line of David but greater than the famous king—as David had prophetically known would be the case. Now resurrected, Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God, having completed His mission of salvation.

The Father was the maker and fulfiller of the Davidic covenant, the One responsible for the overall plan, including the sending of His own Son. He was the One sovereignly calling Peter’s listeners to repentance and faith in Christ. Finally, the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, was the explanation for the phenomenon of tongues they had just witnessed, in which everyone had heard the gospel proclaimed in their own language (2:1–12). He had been sent by the Father and the Son as part of the gift of salvation, to enable and empower the newborn church to spread the good news of God’s love far and wide.

In response, thousands of Peter’s listeners were “cut to the heart,” repented, believed on Jesus, and were baptized the same day (vv. 37–41).

APPLY THE WORD

Praise our triune God for the gift of salvation and the Trinity’s ongoing role in our spiritual lives! You might sing or listen to music that praises God. You might pray, celebrating the parts that each Person of the Godhead plays in redemption. You might serve others, participating in the commission we have: to follow God.

PRAY WITH US

Christine Gorz, vice president of Marketing and Communications, welcomes your prayers for her teams as they communicate Moody’s message to the public. May they continue to demonstrate excellence and passion for the work to the glory of God.

MONDAY
AUGUST
29

*Those who are led by the Spirit of God
are the children of God.*

Romans 8:14

The Trinity and Our Inheritance in Christ

The Greek word *oikia* can mean “house,” as in the physical building. It can also mean “household” or “family,” the people who live there, as well as “extended family” or “clan,” the entire family tree. The term can also indicate the “estate,” that is, wealth and property belonging to the family. This makes the New Testament metaphor of believers being a family or “household of faith” a rich one (see Gal. 6:10)!

Part of this powerful metaphor declares believers to be “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (v. 17). To be an heir of God means we live by the Spirit; we have been transformed through our spiritual rebirth (vv. 5–8). We have a different life purpose, with our minds now set on what God desires. Our lives lead to a different outcome, life rather than death. This is because we have a different relationship with God, one

in which we now seek to please, obey, and submit to Him (see 1 John 3:10).

Life by the Spirit is the evidence that our salvation is real (vv. 9–11). If one is in God’s kingdom, one has the Spirit and a certain hope of resurrection. Conversely, not to have the Spirit indicates one does not belong to Christ at all. Therefore, we have an obligation to live in line with our new spiritual life and identity (vv. 12–13). We should cooperate with the Spirit in putting sin to death in our lives.

The Spirit is the One who brings us into the Father’s family, an adoption made possible by the Son (vv. 14–17). Jesus is, as it were, our older brother, and through Him we have the privilege of calling God “Abba.” Thanks to the Trinity, we’re no longer slaves to sin but are instead children of God!

APPLY THE WORD

What are your “inheritance rights” as a child of God? They include new spiritual life and the promise of bodily resurrection. But they also include a promise of suffering (v. 17). No doubt we prefer to think of blessings and rewards, and these are very real. But we should also rejoice in the privilege of suffering for His name (see Matt. 5:11–12; Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29).

PRAY WITH US

Dr. James Spencer, dean of the Undergraduate School, appreciates prayer for his colleagues in the Dean’s Office, Claudia Beguin, Miriam Mast, Paula Siebold, and Larry Davidhizar, that they would continue to serve God faithfully.

Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:2

TUESDAY
AUGUST
30

The Trinity and the Work of Salvation

Scottish theologian and pastor Sinclair Ferguson said, “Woven into the warp and woof of the New Testament’s exposition of what it means for us to be holy is the great groundwork that the self-existent, thrice holy, triune God has—in Himself, by Himself and for Himself—committed Himself and all three Persons of His being to bringing about the holiness of His own people. This is the Father’s purpose, the Son’s purchase and the Spirit’s ministry.”

Today’s reading again confirms that the entire Trinity is involved in the ongoing work of salvation. First, we as “God’s elect” have been “chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (vv. 1–2). He predestined us for salvation, thus to be made holy, and thus to be adopted as His children. “He has given us new birth into a living hope” and an eternal inheritance (vv. 3–4). His merciful choice and plan existed from eternity past, a reassuring

truth. Our salvation in no way depends on us, but entirely on our perfect and faithful Father (v. 5).

Second, God’s choice was implemented “through the sanctifying work of the Spirit” (v. 2). The term *sanctification* refers to God’s ongoing work of making us holy and Christlike. This work is being done by His Spirit. Through faith in Him, we are already counted righteous in Christ, and the Spirit works in our lives to reduce sin and to increase holiness.

Finally, God chose us “to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood” (v. 2). This sprinkling refers to Old Testament sacrifices, an image of atonement and cleansing (see Heb. 9:14). Jesus’ blood has freed us from sin to obedience. We eagerly await the “salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time,” that is, His Second Coming (v. 5).

APPLY THE WORD

Throughout our study, we’ve seen links between the Trinity and the command to praise God, as in verse 3 of our reading today. Praise includes both specific activities such as proclaiming the goodness of God through word or song and a general disposition oriented toward pleasing God in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Praise Him today!

PRAY WITH US

Today, we invite you to pray for our Counseling Services on Moody’s Chicago campus. Pray that Gayla Gates, Holly Porter, and Stephen Brasel would bring biblical counsel and healing to the hurting and struggling students.

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST
31

To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Ephesians 1:6

The Trinity and the Blessings of Salvation

A recent study found that the five happiest cities in America are all in one state: Louisiana! The researchers explored well-being and life satisfaction data from many sources. The five happiest cities emerged as Lafayette, Houma, Shreveport, Baton Rouge, and Alexandria, Louisiana.

Today's reading, which is all one sentence in Greek, perfectly captures the genuine happiness and joy of redemption. The Father is the giver of this greatest of all blessings. He possesses all wisdom and understanding (v. 8), and in it He sovereignly chose us (vv. 4–5). At just the right time, He revealed His will and lavished on us the riches of His grace (vv. 6–10). His plan for history is moving irresistibly forward (v. 11).

The Son is the means of salvation. The blessings the Father gives are "in Christ" (v. 3). He has chosen us "in him"

(vv. 4, 11). Our adoption and inclusion in God's family are "through Jesus Christ" (vv. 5, 13). God's grace is "in the One he loves" (v. 6). Our forgiveness is "in him" and "through his blood" (v. 7). God's will is "purposed in Christ" and His plan is to put everything "under Christ" (vv. 9–10; Phil. 2:9–11). Our hope is truly "in Christ" alone (v. 12).

The Spirit is the "seal" of our salvation, God's mark of ownership (vv. 13–14). He is also "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance," a down payment on the fullness of salvation. If God can refer to Himself as a "deposit," how inexpressibly glorious the complete reality will be!

Let's close our study this month with a Trinitarian benediction: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14). Amen!

APPLY THE WORD

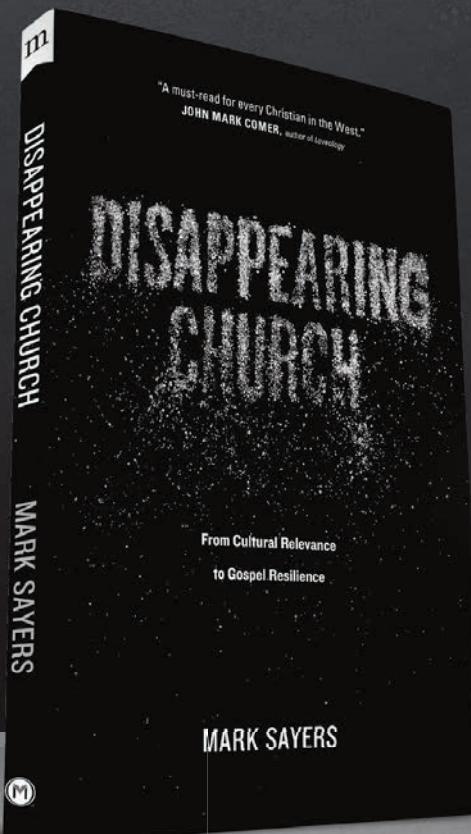
As you think about this study of the Trinity, what has God taught you about Himself? Prayerfully ask the Lord to reveal which truth He would like to apply in your life. You may find it helpful to write down your thoughts in a spiritual journal or discuss them with a close friend. May God richly bless your attentive consideration of His Word!

PRAY WITH US

Reflecting on the theme of this month's study, ask God to show you the work and the ministry of the Trinity in your life. Praise Him for the eternal Word, Jesus Christ, given to us, and that we can know the Father through the Holy Spirit.



"IF THE SALT LOSES ITS
SALTINESS,
IT IS NO LONGER GOOD FOR ANYTHING . . ."



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