

God's Self-Sufficiency
and
The Trinity

God's Self-Sufficiency and The Trinity

Sermon Notes:

God's Self-Sufficiency and The Trinity

Devotional - Day 1

Day 1 – The Trinity – God in Three Persons

Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes) – prepare your heart and mind to hear from God

Scripture – Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Devotional

The more I learn about nature, the more I realize I don't understand, but it causes me to stand in awe of God. For example, as I write this it is snowing outside. All those snowflakes flying around, and scientists have yet to find two exactly alike. How is that possible? And yet, I believe it and am amazed at God's creation!

Another thing I believe yet cannot fully understand, is the Trinity. This is a foundational belief for us as Christians; we often sing of it in a song called “This I Believe (The Creed)” that affirms this doctrinal truth. Some of the lyrics in the chorus are “I believe in God our Father; I believe in Christ the Son; I believe in the Holy Spirit; Our God is three in one.” Yet, it is one of those truths that leave us searching for an adequate way to describe it. People have used the comparisons of an egg having three parts, but God is not three parts making one whole person. Others have used water in the three forms of liquid, ice, and steam to explain the trinity, and yet this analogy is not complete either because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not forms of God; they are God.

What makes this concept even more mysterious is that the word “trinity” is not used in Scripture. Webster, however, defines it as “the union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Godhead.” We have created the word to describe what God has clearly shown us throughout the Bible. From the plural pronoun being used for God at the beginning of Genesis (see Genesis 1:26-27), to the many places where all three Persons in the

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Godhead are acting together, God has shown us that He is three distinct Persons that are each fully God, but there is only One Eternal God. It was this truth that Jesus spoke of that upset the religious leaders of His day causing them to want to crucify Him (see John 10:30).

People may struggle to believe in the Trinity because they cannot fully understand it, but there will always be certain things we cannot fully comprehend because God's ways are so far above our ways. This does not make them any less true; this should just cause us to stand more in awe of Him while continuing to seek Him and the truth we can understand. A. W. Tozer quotes Michael deMolinos in *The Knowledge of the Holy*: "We think more loftily of God by knowing He is incomprehensible, and above our understanding" (p. 19). I believe our God is three in one, even when I cannot fully understand it, and it causes me to stand amazed at Him once again.

Question to Consider

Though you may not be able to comprehend the Trinity completely, why is it important to have a right understanding of it for your faith?

Prayer

Father, I come before You acknowledging that You and Your ways are far above mine. There are so many things I cannot understand, but I choose to believe You and worship You. Thank You for the Trinity that shows me You are the God who desires communication and connection with Your people. Teach me to think more highly of You because that is what You deserve.

Conclude with silence (2 minutes)

Afternoon/Evening Question to Consider

"How does the doctrine of the Trinity affect your worship of God?"
(Driscoll & Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*, p. 438)

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Devotional - Day 2

Day 2 – The Trinity – Three working in Unity

Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes) – prepare your heart and mind to hear from God

Scripture – 2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV)

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

Devotional

Tozer writes in *The Knowledge of the Holy*, “In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe” (p. 23). He goes on to cite several of these works. Take some time today to look at the following passages and ponder how God has shown He is Three Persons in One working in unity:

- Creation – Genesis 1:1-2, 26-27; Colossians 1:15-17; Psalms 104:30
- Jesus’ Incarnation – Luke 1:35
- Jesus’ Baptism – Matthew 3:16-17
- Our Atonement – Hebrews 9:14
- The Resurrection of Christ – Acts 2:32; John 10:17-18; Romans 1:4
- The Indwelling of Christians – John 14:15-23

Question to Consider

God has revealed the amazing truth of the Trinity to us throughout Scripture. Which of His works listed above stands out to you today? Take time to worship and thank God for His incredible and mighty works!

Prayer

You are God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thank you for the way You have worked in unity to save me and change me! May I not only experience Your grace, love and fellowship, but enable me to give that to others today so that You may be seen in me. You alone are worthy of all honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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Conclude with silence (2 minutes)

Afternoon/Evening Question to Consider

In what way(s) might God be calling us as believers to imitate the fellowship, relationship, and unity He has within Himself? What would that mean you need to do within the body of Christ?

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Devotional - Day 3

Day 3 – The Self-Sufficiency of God – He has no need

Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes) – prepare your heart and mind to hear from God

Scripture – John 5:26 (NIV)

“For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.”

Devotional

Think for a moment how you would finish this sentence: “I need . . . “ Did you have any trouble coming up with something to complete that? I know for certain I could finish that sentence in a multitude of ways!

In John 5:26, Jesus makes it clear to the religious rulers that He is not in need of anything from anyone. He holds life within Himself and is totally self-sufficient. Tozer writes in *The Knowledge of the Holy*:

“Whatever God is, and all that God is, He is in Himself. All life is in and from God, whether it be the lowest form of unconscious life or the highly self-conscious, intelligent life of a seraph. No creature has life in itself; all life is a gift of God” (p.32).

God is self-sufficient, and whether people believe Him or not does not change that fact. Webster defines self-sufficient as “able to get along without help; independent.” We like to think that we are self-sufficient and not in need of anyone, but the truth of the matter is that we are a very needy people! We need the basics to survive – food, air, and water, and so many times in life we need support, help and encouragement to keep going. We need resources to sustain life, and we especially need Jesus for our salvation!

God, on the other hand, is not in need of anything. As Tozer so eloquently writes, “Need is a creature-word and cannot be spoken of the Creator” (p. 32). We serve a mighty God from whom all life and blessings flow.

Praise Him! ***God's Self-Sufficiency and The Trinity***

Question to Consider

How does that make you feel knowing God doesn't need anything for life because all of life is in Him? In light of this truth, how would you now finish the sentence, "I need...?"

Prayer

Conclude with silence (2 minutes)

Afternoon/Evening Question to Consider:

Tozer poses a rhetorical question in *The Knowledge of the Holy*, but it is worth pondering: "It is written that He upholds all things by the word of His power. How can He be raised or supported by the things He upholds?"

What are your thoughts about that?

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Devotional - Day 4

Day 4 – The Self-Sufficiency of God – Not necessary, but invited

Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes) – prepare your heart and mind to hear from God

Scripture – Acts 17: 24-28 (NIV)

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so men would seek Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. ‘For in Him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are His offspring.’ “

Devotional

I will never forget my first short-term mission trip to the Bahamas several years ago. Our team was leading a vacation Bible school for the neighborhood children, and a small Haitian girl (probably under the age of two) came with some of the older children. While at the church that was hosting the Bible school, the little one had gone into the bathroom and had an accident. She wasn't in a diaper, though that could have been very helpful! But once she had soiled herself, she then proceeded to try and clean herself up in the lowest “sink bowl” she could reach... a plugged up toilet.

I was asked to go and do what I could to help clean her up. Just walking into the restroom was a challenge to keep my peanut butter and jelly sandwich down, but then I was given two “moist” towelettes, the kind you use to wipe your fingers after eating fried chicken, to do the job. They must have been quite old though, because when I opened them, they were dry as a bone. I knelt on the bathroom floor before this little child trying to clean her to the best of my ability with my two dry finger towels, and I started to think, a bit piously I might add, “Oh, Lord, this is for You. This

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is my sacrifice..." and before I could even finish that thought, I sensed God in my heart say, "I don't need you to clean this child of Mine. I invited you to do this."

In that moment tears began streaming down my face with the reality of my own pride, thinking I was being such a "servant" for God. Being invited to join Him in His work for caring for this baby wasn't a sacrifice as much as it was a privilege. Let me just say, that experience deflated some of the stuffy spiritual wind out of my sails, but God replaced it with the truth that our service for Him is an honor, because He is God and isn't in NEED of anything from us. Yet He chooses to invite us into His work. How humbling!

A.W. Tozer writes, "So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God. . . . Probably the hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help." (Knowledge of the Holy, p. 34) God is self-sufficient and therefore, does not need us to do His work, yet He invites us to be a part of it. What a privilege! What an honor!

Question to Consider

Can you think of a responsibility you have at work, home, or church where you think if you don't do this particular job, no one else will do it and it just won't get done? How could the truth that God invites you to be a part of His work change your attitude toward this task?

Prayer

Lord, forgive me for my pride that causes me to have a higher opinion of myself and my service to You than is accurate. The fact is, You invite me to join You in Your work though You have no need of me. You could do whatever You want without me, yet You desire to engage me in what You are doing, teaching me and stretching me. Thank You for Your patience and grace with me when all I can offer You is brokenness.

Conclude with silence (2 minutes)

Afternoon/Evening Question to Consider

What work might God be inviting you to join Him in? How will you respond to Him?

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Devotional - Day 5

Day 5 – The Self-Sufficiency of God – Self-Sufficient & All Sufficient

Silence and Stillness before God (2 minutes) – prepare your heart and mind to hear from God

Scripture – Psalm 145:13-19 (NIV)

“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made. The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them.”

Devotional

This week we have looked at the Trinity and self-sufficiency of God. We have learned that because of the fellowship God has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and because He is self-sufficient, He has no need of anyone or anything. And we have also considered the fact that as humans, we are very needy. What we can take from this today is that God does not need to draw power or comfort or fellowship or anything else from anyone, but we absolutely need to draw these things and more from Someone outside of ourselves.

God is the only One who can ever truly satisfy the thirst in each of our hearts. He is an unending source of abundant life for those of us who are His children (see John 10:10). Tozer writes, “Since He is the Being supreme over all, it follows that God cannot be elevated. Nothing is above Him, nothing beyond Him” (Knowledge of the Holy, p. 33). He is and always will be more than enough for you and me, above and beyond anything we attempt to satisfy our hearts with. He is self-sufficient, and He is all-sufficient for His creation.

Jesus said of Himself in John 7:37-38, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” We must learn that God in His self-sufficiency is all-sufficient and able to satisfy the empty, broken, and hungry heart. Not only is He able, but He is truly the only One who can meet our deep needs.

Question to Consider

In what way(s) have you tried/do you try to satisfy the desires of your heart? What has been the outcome? How can the truth of God being self-sufficient and all-sufficient meet that desire/need today?

Prayer

Lord, You alone can meet my deep needs and satisfy my thirst. Help me not only know this as a fact, but let it be my experience, that I may know You as “all I need.” Thank You that You are loving toward all you have made, including me. Thank You for knowing my deep needs even before I do, and for knowing how to fulfill my desires perfectly. You are above all things. You are God alone. Amen.

Conclude with silence (2 minutes)

Afternoon/Evening Question to Consider

Take some time to read all of Psalm 145. List all that you learn about God in these verses. Praise Him for these things.



Week #1: God's Self-Sufficiency and The Trinity

GOAL:

What comes to your mind when you think about God? Have you ever considered what images or words are the first to pop into your mind when you think about Him? In *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer says what we believe about God is the most important thing about us.

What we think about God affects everything in our lives from our willingness to obey God, to how we view and do our work, how we handle conflict, how we relate to others, how we handle temptation, how we pray, and so much more. Therefore, we need to make sure we know the truth about who God is so we can trust Him and follow Him with our hope anchored securely in Him.

This week we are focusing on God being Three Persons in One, which we call the Trinity. We are also looking at the self-sufficiency of God. Though God, His thoughts, and His ways are so far above ours, let's pursue together the "knowledge of the Holy," not just to collect factual data, but so we can fall deeper in love and awe of Him who saved us.

LOVING GOD:

- * Memory Verse: **Isaiah 55:8-9** "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."
- * 2 minutes of silence
- * Devotional: choose one of the 5 devotionals for this week on the Trinity and Self-sufficiency of God to read aloud to the group.
- * Question to Consider: this will come from the devotional as well
- * 2 minutes of silence

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BUILDING COMMUNITY:

* Growing Connected Questions

- As a child, what was your image of God?
- How has that changed or not changed now that you are older?
- What stood out to you from this past week's message?

MAKING DISCIPLES:

* Bible Study Scriptures:

Read the following Scriptures out loud in the group:

II Corinthians 13:14; John 5:26; Acts 17:24-28

* Questions:

- Chip Ingram writes in his book, *God As He Longs for You to See Him*, that life's most important questions are: What do you think about God? What do you think He thinks about you? How do these perceptions affect your relationship with Him? How do you respond to these questions?
- Why is it important to know God's attributes?
- In what ways have you heard the Trinity explained?
- If someone asked you to explain the Trinity to a child, how would you describe it in one sentence?
- Read **II Corinthians 13:14**. How does the Bible display the truth of the Trinity though the word "trinity" is never used in Scripture?
- What does it mean that God is self-sufficient?
- How does God's self-sufficiency compare to how we as humans think we are self-sufficient?
- Have someone read **John 5:26** and **Acts 17:24-18**. What do we learn about God from these verses? What do they say about God's self-sufficiency?

* Application: (Each week these questions will be similar)

- How does my understanding of the Trinity and God being self-sufficient affect my relationship with Him?
- If I truly understand and believe this about God, how will it affect the way I live?
- What is God saying to me? What am I going to do about it?

* Daily Devotionals:

- Read the daily devotions for Week #1 “God’s Self-Sufficiency and The Trinity”.

*Going Deeper (The following are added optional resources for you to help you grow in your understanding of this week’s attribute(s) of God):

- If you want to take the challenge, get a copy of A. W. Tozer’s *The Knowledge of the Holy*, and read chapters 4 & 6.
- Take time to study the Scriptures listed on Day 2 of week #1 on the ways God reveals the Trinity working together. What can you learn about the way the Godhead works together?