

TRINITY 3B - What Difference Does the Trinity Make?

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[0 : 00] It is the 4th of March 2004. Peter Adam is speaking on What difference does the Trinity make?

Great privilege of course and delight to be here tonight. A kind of celebration of lots of years of Christian ministry isn't it? And the contribution that so many of God's people have made to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the honouring of Jesus Christ in this place.

And it's so humbling isn't it to think of the great things that God has done over the last 150 years. So a great delight to be with you tonight to share in that. Well let's think about Trinity. What difference does it make?

John Calvin writes God so proclaims himself the sole God as to offer himself to be contemplated clearly in three persons. Unless we grasp these only the bare and empty name of God flips about in our brains the exclusion of the true God.

In the last few years the Christian faith has been demythologised demythologised by Rudolf Bultmann and deliteralised by Tielik. Ronald Blush asks the question Could we now re-symbolise the language of the faith?

[1 : 07] Does God language give true knowledge or merely symbolic awareness of the ultimate reality we call God? In traditional churches you see people are still talking about God as Father, Son and Spirit.

In more modern churches people use different kinds of language about God. God the unknown God the mystery God the creator God the sanctifier God the holy one but not the language that we're taught to use in the scriptures about God.

So can we continue to use traditional language about God? Can we still call God Father, Son and Spirit? Other words we use to describe and address God true words.

Well this first section of the talk is the most difficult to understand so if you'd like a nap my advice is to sleep now and then I'll wake you up about a third of the way through.

So if you're quite comfortable seatbelts fastened I'll begin. Other words we use to describe and address God true words. The traditional reply to this question is that God words are an analogical use of language.

[2 : 08] They're not univocal, the same or equivocal, entirely different but analogical that is they work by analogy with similar but different meanings to ordinary language. The difficulty with this reply is that it doesn't indicate the extent of the similarity nor the extent of the difference and so it leaves open the possibility that the difference is so great that we don't know the true meaning of our words when we use analogical language.

So for example we know what Father means but we do not know what Heavenly Father means. So Peter kindly comments in his recent book Reflections in Glass every positive statement we make about God must be qualified by a negative and qualifying statement.

We do know what we mean by Father but we don't know the meaning of the qualifier Heavenly. The problem is intensified in contemporary debate about whether or not language about anything is literally true.

In the words of William Urban any expression in language contains some symbolic element. This may seem like the death of meaning but instead I believe it helps us understand how language about God works.

For there's a sense in which any language about any Father contains both common meaning and difference in meaning and yet we still find it a satisfactory and effective means of communication.

[3 : 15] My experience of a Father is like your experience and yet different. And for both of us the word Father is illuminated by our personal experience and also formed by the culture in which we live the books and films we read and see and perhaps our own experience of being a Father.

And we can use the same word Father with a wide range of meaning even within language about human fathers. So in fact human beings are well used to using words with a common meaning but a variation as well.

And the more self-aware we are the more we're able to understand the possible range of meanings and yet we still manage effective communication with our ordinary use of language. We use words to communicate literal truth and we use words to communicate literal truth by means of metaphor.

We know what we mean in calling God our Father and we know what we mean in calling Jesus the Good Shepherd. I'm sure that encourages you. The reason we know what these words mean is that God has used human words in his communication with humanity.

And God is at least as able as we are to achieve effective communication by means of words. What do we mean by God the Father is clarified by the scriptures as also is the meaning of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

[4 : 24] We use these words, that is we call God Father we rightly call Jesus the Good Shepherd because at best our use of them corresponds with God's use of those words. Well there are two objections to this view.

The one is that no human beings achieve effective communication which is clearly not true. The other is that God is so great, transcendent and incomprehensible that God is not able to accommodate and condescend to use ordinary human language.

That's rubbish. In fact, God is so transcendent that he is able to use human language for effective communication without diminishing his glory and power. Indeed, his glory and power is seen in his ability to speak to human beings, to you and to me.

If we're able to communicate effectively using words then God is also able to communicate using words and in doing so uses all the methods of communication that we used in Bible times that we find in the Bible including parable, story, direct speech, proverb, poetry and history.

There's great variety in the modes of verbal communication but God's use reflects the human use of Bible times and also achieves what God intends. Calvin has a great picture of God being like a nurse speaking baby talk, able to speak baby talk to the children she's looking after.

[5 : 34] You know, when you see people talking to their babies and they say, ga ga ga, and the baby says ga ga back again and finally you graduate to words like mum, mum, mum and the baby finally says mum, mum, mum and then dad, dad, dad and the question is, are you communicating with the baby?

And the answer is, you're teaching the baby what these words mean. And of course the baby doesn't get that at first. They look at the dog and say mum, mum, mum and you have to say, no, that's not mum, mum, mum that's dog, dog, dog so then they look at dad and say dog, dog, og and you say, no, that's dad, dad, dad so we teach children the meaning of words and God is able to speak our language in fact we can use words because God has used words or rather we can use the words that God has used.

Disunderstandings only occur in communication but that points to the fact that we usually achieve effective communication and of course the most effective communication happens in long-term committed relationships when there is such love, focused attention, patience sympathy and a willingness to admit failures in communication and misunderstanding and that's exactly the attitude we should bring to our hearing of God's words whether as individuals or as a church.

We're able not only to think God's thoughts after him in the words of Kepler but also to speak God's words after him. To speak God's words after him does not as Peter carnally suggests represent an attempt to encapsulate him and have him on our own terms.

Peter carnally in his book supports his claim by quoting Isaiah 55.8 where God says through the prophets my thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways. But that in fact is not a statement of universal human incapacity to understand God but of the wickedness of God's people in contradicting God.

[7 : 07] It's preceded by these words let the wicked forsake their way and the unrighteous their thoughts. We can only know the truthfulness of the claim that God's thoughts are not our thoughts if we have some knowledge of what God thinks.

Peter carnally in his book also quotes Paul in Romans 11 with approval where Paul writes Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom of God how unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.

But the Paul who wrote those words also wrote in Romans that he serves God by announcing the gospel of his son. Claims that he is not ashamed of the gospel which is the power of God for salvation. And claims that God is able to strengthen the Romans according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ.

Paul evidently has a more subtle theology than Peter carnally is able to imagine. For it includes both the certainty of verbal revelation and the humility of knowing that we do not fully understand God and his way.

Peter carnally approves of Rowan Williams' warning that those who engage in building theological systems may use their body of clear and distinct truth as a weapon of power to browbeat and bludgeon others.

[8 : 05] No doubt this has happened many times in the history of the church. However the misuse of something is not an argument against its usefulness or validity. And of course it's just as easy for those who assert the incomprehensibility of God to use this assertion as a weapon of power to browbeat and bludgeon others.

Of course we don't know God as God knows God but we may still know God. As we read in Deuteronomy 29.29 the secret things belong to the Lord our God the revealed things belong to us and to our children forever.

God's self-revelation is a volitional God who is more trustworthy not less trustworthy than humanity he created. So we do know the character of God otherwise we could scarcely claim that love is his name.

If God is unknown perhaps the dreaded fundamentalists are closer to the truth than Peter kindly realised. We can of course have knowledge and ignorance. Jesus taught that heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away but about that hour or day no one knows neither the angels nor the son but only the father.

So when we call God father we learn what this means both in considering the ways in which he acts as our father in the scriptures and also the way in which God the father acts towards God the son and the ways in which God the son relates to his father.

[9 : 14] When we call Jesus by his name we know him. When we address him as Christ, Lord, God and Saviour we know his significance in our relationship with him. When we address the Holy Spirit the spirit of truth we know the one to whom we speak.

What B.B. Warfield calls common Trinitarian consciousness of the New Testament writers reflects the revelation of God which they receive to pass on to us. God's self-revelation is not only experiences or ideas but also the words by which those experiences and ideas are conveyed.

Paul puts this very clearly in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We have received the spirit that is from God that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. Verse 12. Verse 13. We speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the spirit.

So the spirit knows the depths of God and conveys the gifts of God in the words of God. It's a further sign of God's grace that God's verbal revelation here it is not only effective true and significant but also able to be translated.

That's a great miracle and every time I hear the Bible read I think again this is extraordinary because you see Judaism and Christianity and Islam are all religions which hold to a God who speaks but only Christianity believes that those very words of God given by the Holy Spirit may be translated into any language and still retain their power and effect.

[10 : 31] If you go to a synagogue scriptures are read in Hebrew and Aramaic. You go to a mosque the Quran is read in its original language Arabic and indeed when I was visiting Pakistan I watched little Pakistani boys learning the Quran by heart in Arabic and they understood not a word of what they were learning.

Extraordinary. But in Christian churches all around the world the Bible is read in translation wherever possible and it still retains its God given power. How does it do that? The answer is that the Bible's main claim for itself is that of power.

It is the word of God that will not fall to the ground or return void but will accomplish God's purpose. It has the power of a seed generative or regenerative power. It has the power to make us wise for salvation and to equip us for every good work.

The words of God as the gospel are the power of God for salvation. The full fruit of biblical power is the self-revelation of God the Trinity. Worshipping anything or anyone other than God is idolatry.

Worshipping and serving the creation rather than the creator. We must worship and serve the one and only true and living God. The doctrine of the Trinity shows us what we may and should worship. God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 40] And the doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that when we do so we are worshipping the one true God. And this doctrine reassures us we don't have to choose between the Father and not the Son or the Spirit and not the Father.

We Christians are delivered from the petty jealousies and acts of revenge of the many gods of polytheism. The Father delights in the worship we give the Son and gives us the Spirit. The Son delights to show us the Father and to pour out the Spirit.

And the Spirit shows us the Son and the Father. For we read No one has ever seen God it is God the only Son close to the Father's heart who has made him known. Jesus said Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

And the risen and glorified Lord Jesus having received the promise of the Holy Spirit poured out that Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We know God the Father God the Son and God the Spirit.

We do not know or understand God fully but we have true if incomplete knowledge. And this knowledge that God has revealed to us enables us to know God in truth and reality. We can call God by name.

[12 : 38] The great privilege. Paul put it in Athens What you worship as unknown I proclaim to you. Secondly the Trinity what difference does it make to the Gospel? The incarnation of Jesus Christ and the atoning death of Christ lie at the heart of the message of the Bible at the heart of the Gospel.

Christianity is Christ and Christ the incarnate Son of God and the crucified Son of God is of the essence of Christianity. Or consider these texts from John's Gospel. In the beginning was the Word the Word was with God the Word was God the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

God the only Son close to the Father's heart has made him known. John 3.16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

The incarnation lies at the centre of Christianity. By the incarnation we don't mean that the whole of God Father, Son and Spirit became incarnate. No, only the Son took on flesh and in his earthly life he still prayed to and obeyed his Heavenly Father and lived and ministered by the power of the Holy Spirit.

By the incarnation we don't mean that God had been one and all of a sudden at the beginning of the New Testament broke up into three parts. No, God had and has always been God, Father, Son and Spirit even when not revealed in that fullness in the Old Testament.

[13 : 49] So when we read the word God or Lord in the Old Testament that these words refer to the triune God because there is no other true and living God. By the incarnation again we don't mean that the eternal Son stopped being the eternal Son was transformed into a human being for a little over 30 years and then was transformed back into being God again.

Rather we mean that the eternal Son added to himself humanity from Mary and became truly human that is a true human being as well as truly God that is truly God the Son.

By the incarnation we don't mean that the divinity and humanity was mixed up together so that Jesus was a new kind of being neither truly human nor truly God. Rather we mean that he was and remained a full human being as well as fully the Son of God.

And by the incarnation we don't mean that God functions sometimes as a human when he cried and sometimes as the Son of God when he did miracles. Rather we mean that whatever he did he did as the one who was truly the Son of God and the Son of God who was also a true full human being.

Now I want you to see and please concentrate on this the doctrine of the Trinity is essential to make sense of the incarnation. For if God is one and not three and the one God is incarnate then we cannot make sense of Jesus' prayers for there is no one for him to pray to.

[15 : 01] He won't be able to hear a voice from heaven for there is no one to speak and he won't be able to receive the Spirit because he himself is all God there is. Next we see that the grand purpose of the incarnation was the atonement.

The atoning death of Christ provided sufficient reason for the incarnation. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve to give his life as a ransom for many.

God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus a great high priest over the house of God. In the words of Van Stelm the great Archbishop of Canterbury it's needful that the very same person who is to make this satisfaction be perfect that is complete God and perfect that is complete man since no one can do it except one who is truly God and no one ought to do it except the one who is truly man.

Why was the incarnation necessary for the atonement and Trinity necessary for the incarnation? The work of atonement that is of Jesus dying on the cross is essentially the work of the Son directed towards the Father but if we leave this statement outside the context of the Trinity then there are two very serious consequences.

If there is no Trinity then the man Jesus who died on the cross is not God dying in our place but a human being who dies to save us from God. This is the case we are not saved by God but saved from God.

[16:18] If Jesus is not God incarnate then God is not our Saviour but the man Jesus is our Saviour delivering us from the wrath and judgment of God. Secondly if there is no Trinity then the work of salvation cannot be the work of God because for the work of salvation to be God's completely God's own personal work it requires God to be both the priest who offers himself as a sacrifice and God to be the one who receives the sacrifice.

God can only be the one who personally achieves our salvation. God is both the one who dies and the one who receives that death as effective atonement. God can only be our Saviour if God is the one who both pays the price for our salvation his death on the cross and is also the one to whom the price is paid.

For as Paul describes in the Romans God is both the one who puts forward a sacrifice of atonement by Jesus' blood and this Jesus is also God who is blessed forever. Without the Trinity there can be no incarnation of the Son of God.

Without the incarnation of the Son of God there can be no self-substitution of God on the cross. God will be able to arrange our salvation but not able to achieve it personally. Now I've often heard preachers explaining the atonement this way.

I'm sure you've heard this illustration. It's been around since I was a boy. Since Adam was a boy actually. It's just a long time. The Father represents the justice of God and God the Son represents the love of God. God the Father represents the holiness of God and God the Son his compassion.

[17:36] But Trinity rescues us from this error. It's God the Father who gave his only Son who noted his Messiah to be the Savior of the world. And God the Son died in order to achieve it. God the Father did not die but God the Father gave his Son that the Son might die.

If you've heard this illustration it's like a courtroom you see. God the Father is like a judge who's about to pronounce sentence of death on a criminal. But just before the judge pronounces sentence Jesus is like a passerby who wanders into the courtroom and he says oh judge just before you pronounce sentence on Paul in the dock here I offered to die in the place of the criminal.

And the judge says well I don't mind who dies really Paul or you why don't you die and Paul you can go free. Well there are two great weaknesses in this picture of atonement. The first is that there is a closer connection between Jesus and humanity than between a criminal and a mere passerby.

The second more relevant to us here that it portrays God the Father as the judge who is impassive uncaring or even reluctant to forgive and who's surprised by the initiative of the passerby with whom he has no connection.

The doctrine of the Trinity saves us from this great error. God is the God who saves. God the Father sends the Son. God the Son goes to do the will of the Father. So we read in Hebrews 9 that Christ having been offered once for all to bear the sins of many and in Hebrews 7 that he offered himself.

[18:50] Both are true. God the Father offered Christ and Christ offered himself. Jesus did not save us from God he was God saving us. Listen to this Jesus did not save us from God he was God in person saving us.

What I've done so far is to try to show that without God the Father and God the Son the great work of atonement could not have happened. There could have been no self-substitution of God in our place. There still remains however the role of the Holy Spirit.

What I've proved is the need for a binity not a trinity. My trouble is there's only one Bible verse that associates the Holy Spirit with the historical work of atonement. That's Hebrews 9 13 and 14 where we read for if the blood of goats and bulls sanctifies those who've been defiled how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God.

Here we learn that Christ our great high priest who offered his own body and blood as a sacrifice for sin offered himself through the eternal spirit without meaning in the power of the spirit. But of course it should come as no surprise that Jesus who came in the power of the spirit was anointed with the spirit by the father at his baptism should then offer himself in the power of the spirit in his atoning death.

As F.F. Bruce points out the servant of the Lord in Isaiah who will fulfil his work as the suffering servant who bears the sin of many is the one of whom God says I put my spirit upon him.

[20 : 06] It should not surprise us that there is only one reference to the work of the spirit in atonement as the main focus of the spirit's work is to apply in us what God has worked for us. For what God the Saviour achieves on his cross by his own personal work that is God does it he works within us by his own personal work in the spirit.

God is personally present in the work of atonement on the cross in Christ and God is personally present in the work of application in our lives and in the church in the Holy Spirit. Peter links the particular works of God the Father, Son and Spirit in these words when he describes believers as those who've been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled by his blood.

It is God who is our Saviour God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. No wonder then we read in a number of theologians the following claims about the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Emil Brunner The Trinity is the theological doctrine which defends the central faith of the Bible and the Church.

Timothy George The Trinity was crucial because it was the witness to the deity of Jesus Christ and thus to the certainty of salvation secured by him. James Torrance The Trinity is the very grammar of the Christian Gospel.

And Broughton Knox Jesus cannot be called Lord apart from the doctrine of the Trinity. And thirdly what difference does the Trinity make to our life together? A common feature of modern Trinitarian thought is that the doctrine of the Trinity can and should provide for human behaviour and most of all a model for the Church.

[21 : 27] As Wolf points out this is because the Trinity combines both unity and multiplicity and because the life of the Trinity is marked by love. But as Miroslav Wolf points out the former is so vague that no one cares to dispute it and the latter so divine that no one can live it.

Well the focus on the Trinitarian nature of God either leads to the justification of some forms of hierarchy within human relations or to egalitarian ideals. It often seems to me that the ideals of either hierarchy or egalitarianism are first derived from society or the Church and then read into God.

For while both God and the Church have elements of unity and diversity is it in fact the case that the model of diversity in God is directly transferable to the Church or to human society? Well we might expect the Trinity should provide a model for human behaviour if we reflect that humanity is made in the image and likeness of God.

So in light of the similarity between God and ourselves Augustine looked for signs of the Trinity within human and human experience. You might also expect the Trinity provides some example for us to follow. In fact it's not in God being Trinity that we find an example in the Scriptures but some other aspect of his being, character and action.

We should be cautious because while there are themes of the imitation of God in the Bible there's no encouragement to imitate God as Trinity. We are called to be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect in loving our enemies. We are called to forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven you and to be imitators of God as beloved children and live in love.

[22 : 46] But these are caused to imitate the actions of God not his Trinitarian character. But Broughton-Lox claims the doctrine of Trinity is the glory of the Christian religion and tells us that the ultimate reality is personal relationship.

God is ultimate reality and the ground of all other reality and yet God is not a single monad or an immanent personal absolute but God is relationship. God is Trinity. That's undoubtedly true but it's difficult to be more exact in moving from the Triune God to ourselves for two reasons.

The first is we don't have a complete and exact knowledge about the relationships within the Triune God and the second is that the Bible concentrates on the imitation of Christ rather than the imitation of the Trinitarian God. But of course if we imitate Christ we'll reflect all that we need to of the character of God.

In fact, Rolf is wrong to claim that the love of God is so divine that only God can live it for we too are called to imitate the love of God in Christ Jesus. But I suppose the most important thing I want to say the climax of what I want to say tonight is that the doctrine of Trinity makes a difference to our fellowship with God, Father, Son and Son.

As the doctrine of Trinity is the key to God's gracious act towards us in Jesus Christ so too the doctrine of Trinity is the key to our response to God in faith, obedience and worship. In terms of faith we are called to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to repent and believe the good news.

[23 : 55] Christianity must include at its centre faith in Jesus Christ. However, faith in Christ has no meaning apart from understanding that this Jesus is the Messiah sent by God the only Son of his Heavenly Father. Three of the Gospels have near their beginning the account of Jesus' baptism which only makes sense if faith in Christ is also a response to the Father who speaks from heaven in an expectation of the power of the Spirit in the life of Christ.

To know Christ fully is also to know the Father who sent him and to receive the Advocate the Spirit of Truth sent by Jesus after his death and resurrection. Our access to God is Trinitarian. Through Christ we have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Our experience of God is Trinitarian. Paul prays to the Father that the Ephesians might be strengthened with power through his Spirit that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Or as Paul writes in Romans when we cry Abba, Father it's the very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

The work of God in salvation is described in Titus 3 as including goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour renewal by the Holy Spirit and this Spirit being poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The unity of the Church described expressed in so many different gifts is found in the work of the one God described by Paul 1 Corinthians 12 as Spirit Lord and God and John at the beginning of the book of Revelation brings a greeting grace and peace to you from the one who was and who is and who is to come from the seven spirits who are before his throne and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

[25 : 24] The full Christian knowing of God is Trinitarian knowing. John Owen the great Puritan writer makes this clear in his extensive study of communion with God or fellowship with God. Our communion then with God consists in his communication of himself to us and our return to him of that which he requires and accepts flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with him.

It's twofold perfect and complete in the full fruition of his glory and total giving up of ourselves to him resting in him as our utmost end which we shall enjoy and we see him as he is and now initial and incomplete in the first fruits and dawnings of that perfection which we have here in grace.

He draws out the full experience of communion or fellowship with God and then with each person that is Father, Son and Spirit distinctly in love, grace and consolation. Indeed he claims that there is no grace whereby our souls go forth unto God no act of divine worship yielded unto him no duty or obedience performed but they are distinctly directed unto Father, Son and Spirit.

Well I think he claims too much for we may rightly direct our obedience to God without distinguishing between Father, Son and Spirit. It is right to claim that our devotion may be enriched by meditation on the graces we receive from the Father, from the Son and from the Spirit and our response to the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

And this close communion with the Father and the Son and the Spirit comes from our relationship with Christ. In everything he says we are made partakers of the divine nature. There is a communication and receiving between God and us.

[26 : 47] So near are we unto him in Christ. Well I argued in my Grove booklet on Living the Trinity written in 1982 and I think still in print that Christians and churches may have a knowledge and experience of God which is too small if they focus on one person in the Trinity and neglect the others.

A church which focuses on the Father may lack gospel clarity and gospel confidence. A church which focuses on the Son may have no effective understanding of the value of creation. And a church which focuses on the Spirit may lack an awareness of the historical basis of our faith.

Trinitarian churches like this church should not only affirm the doctrine of the Trinity but also practice Trinitarian faith and spirituality. This indeed is more than just relating consciously to the Father and to the Son and to the Spirit.

For our life caught up in God is more like relating to a loving community than it is like relating to a loving individual. We're turned to the Father and He gives up the Son and the Spirit. We turn to the Son He shows us the Father and breathes the Spirit upon us.

We turn to the Spirit and He shows us the Father and the Son. Finally is prayer Trinitarian. A normal pattern as I'm sure you're aware is to pray to the Father having free access to Him through the atoning death of Christ our great High Priest and prompted and moved to pray by the Holy Spirit within us.

[27 : 53] So we pray to God the Father through Jesus Christ and we're pushed to pray prompted to pray urged to pray moved to pray by the Holy Spirit within us. So we pray to God by means of God moved by God and this pattern of our prayer is one of the most distinctive features of our Trinitarian faith and life.

Trinitarian prayer is nothing like this. Now we may go further as although the common prayer is to pray to the Father we may also pray to the Son as in the great New Testament prayer Maranatha our Lord come.

There is in fact only one reference to prayer addressed to the Spirit in the Bible and that's in Ezekiel 37 as you remember where the prophet is instructed by the Lord to pray come from the four winds O breath or O Spirit and breathe upon these slain that they may live.

It has become Christian practice based on good theology to address prayers and songs to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit breathe on me breath of God as of course to our Heavenly Father.

I'd like us now to turn and worship and adore our great God Father, Son and Spirit our Saviour and Lord. I'd like to lead you as we sing a little chorus Father we adore you lay our lives before you how we love you Jesus we adore you lay our lives before you how we love you Spirit we adore you lay our lives before you how we love you Father we are the role of the Spirit.

[29 : 07] In some respects I think the question is more an internal one for Holy Trinity rather than perhaps a theological one outright. I guess a simple one point answer would be that in my practice of expository preaching as I trust through the whole counsel of God trying to preach through the various types of scripture Old New Testament various types within the New Testament then to the extent that the Holy Spirit is emphasised focused upon the subject of scriptures then so he will be preached upon and taught in the preaching here.

Colossians the Holy Spirit isn't mentional which is an extraordinary kind of achievement when you think about it but I think a church where the scriptures are being read and preached is a church where the Holy Spirit is speaking clearly. That's a good thing isn't it?

That if your preacher is working through the scriptures then what he's doing is saying all the Holy Spirit wants to say. That's great. Enjoy it. But at last. People are sinful and believe all sorts of things so I imagine that it must be true somewhere at least.

It's not my view. I thought you were a friend of mine. What happened to the relationship with the Trinity when Jesus died on the cross? That's a very difficult question to answer. It's difficult to answer because the Bible doesn't make clear what happened to the relationship within the Trinity.

The clue we have is Jesus' great cry Eloi, Eloi, lama sabakhani why have you forsaken me? Now it's possible to think to yourself well actually he wasn't forsaken by God he just felt forsaken by God.

[30 : 29] There was no actual sort of gap break up within the Trinity at that point. But that I think is to misunderstand the meaning of his death because what happens at the death of Jesus is that our sin the sin of the world lies between the Son and the Father.

Now that must that's deep pain within God. That's not God saying for a distance I'm just going to solve that problem by flicking my finger. That's deep pain within God. We know it's experienced by the Son.

The Bible doesn't make it clear that it is experienced by the Father or the Spirit. So the language the Bible uses of the Father giving the Son must imply some kind of self-sacrifice or diminution or something like that.

So the best I can do I think is to say that in the atoning death of Christ God was profoundly affected and that's probably all I can say without knowing exactly what that means in terms of the Father and the Son.

But in terms of the Son it meant that the perfect Son took on himself all our imperfection and the result of that was death. It was a slightly humorous sort of illustration to sort of end the Bible study but my point that I made from that imperfect analogy was that the Spirit in a sense being shy or tiring is directing attention elsewhere that is to Jesus.

[31 : 43] That's what happens on the day of Pentecost the Spirit's poured out people ask what's happening Peter explains it and he explains it by talking about the significance of Jesus as the one who's the one they rejected the one who's God has made Lord and Christ who's poured out the Holy Spirit.

So Pentecost sermon begins with the Spirit but points at the end towards Jesus Christ. It's a great idea thank you. The question is Romans chapter 8 and I'll just read the verses out just to remind you when we cry Abba Father it's that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ in fact Paul continues if in fact we suffer with him we may be also glorified with him.

What Paul means there I think is that Christ is the heir of all the good gifts of God as the only Son of God the Son is the heir of all God's good purposes Jesus is the Son who dies and the Father raises him so that he can receive all the great blessings that God the Father wants to give him but Jesus doesn't keep those treasures for himself he makes us fellow heirs with him.

It's like if your granny left you lots of money in her will when she died and then you said to lots of your friends you can be joint heirs with me that is you're going to receive with me all the good gifts that the granny left us so what Jesus does is to share with us all the good gifts that God gives him including of course the Holy Spirit and including the new heaven and the new earth and all the glories of that so that's what it is to be a joint heir with Christ an immense privilege not just forgiven but made a joint heir with Christ.

Great. Sorry. The question is Broad and Knox talks about being enveloped into a relationship that's also in mind here yes it is you're right to point that out Paul picks up the theme of suffering and glory doesn't he in the next verse the sufferings of this present time not worth comparing with the glory that's about to be revealed the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God he says in verse 23 we have the first truth of the spirit we groan inwardly while we wait for adoption the redemption of our bodies and then he goes on to say how God works for a good purpose through everything and then who can separate us from the love of God well nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord that's exactly right it's that relationship which is established not just the goodies we get the relationship established as we're joined here as Christ thank you three studies that I've done this week I'm not really a Trinitarian scholar so I decline to answer the question on the grounds of ignorance let's talk about an asymmetry between the father, son and the spirit that is that the father, son and the spirit are equally God but there's an asymmetric relationship between them I think that's probably right myself