

The Cross of Christ – Part 14

Not to belabor the outline, but just to remind you that we went on the journey to the cross, came to the cross, prepared to land, this is holy ground, and sometimes the blessing that flows is dependent on the preparation of the heart to receive the blessing. And then the God-man in the Garden of Gethsemane, the ‘sweet suffering’—that is that suffering that is not sought, but accepted out of devotion to the greater pleasure of the glorification of God. “Don’t weep for Me; weep for yourselves and your children.” The forgiving of ignorance—that ignorance, if it were excusable needed no forgiveness. So the revelation in the phrase is ignorance needed to be forgiven; because we are ignorant of what we ignore. And we ignore what we give a low priority. Then paradise promised to the thief on the cross. Then the darkness fell and we explored fully what took place in that darkness. And then that cry of all cries: “My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?” And we milked that for all it was worth from the sum of the Word of God. And then, “Woman behold your son” to break us out of the mold of our confining Earthly relationships into the agape love of God that is extended regardless of Earthly relationships. And then, “I thirst”—basically so that we never have to thirst spiritually. And “It is finished”; and then “Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.”

Then today we’re going to look at the Trinity at the cross. We’ll get part way into that and then finish next time. Now the Trinity, as you all know, is one of God’s mysteries. How can an infinite transcendent being ever reveal *fully* anything to a finite created being? Ephesians 4:4-6 – “There is one body (that is the church), one Spirit, one Lord, one God, one Father.” So the ultimate position of rest for the Christian is not to understand fully, it’s to *rest in God as a little child*. No matter how bright we are; no matter how much information we have crammed into our brains; no matter how much of the Bible that we have memorized; we’re still going to come to the position of resting in the mystery of God that transcends the limits of our ability to understand. So we become as little children—that is to say, to fully accept that which we do not understand. God does truly exist and express Himself in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Well, how can He do that? Well, that’s a logical, rational question to ask. We’ve already accepted many things by faith. We’ve accepted that God is—that’s Hebrews 11:6. If you’re going to come to God, you have to believe that He is. And we’ve accepted many aspects of what He is, the fundamental aspect being, He is Holy. He is ‘other than’. He is wholly different from anything else in all of existence; omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, transcendent, sovereign. If you swallow those things, we’ve swallowed the camel. So don’t ever strain at the gnat of finite understanding. God is not limited by concepts understandable by the human mind. Else, He wouldn’t be sovereign. Isaiah 55:8-9 we know so well – “My ways and My thoughts are higher than your ways and your thoughts.” And it’s not just a little higher; it’s not ever as if God somehow understands just a little more than we do and He keeps the rest secret just so He appears bigger than us. His ways and His thoughts are infinitely higher.

Now God has chosen to reveal Himself to man in three persons. A sovereign being can do that. A Holy, ‘other than’ God can do that. Why would He do it? Well, we don’t really have to know the answer to that. We’re simply to rest in it. Now Jesus, as always,

becomes our model. And I've mentioned this Scripture before of how to rest in a Holy God that transcends our understanding of any particular issue. Matthew 11:26 Jesus says – "Praise You, Father (He's praising the Father) for hiding it from the wise and revealing it to babes." Now see the wise is the one that always has to understand in order to believe. 'And if I don't understand it, I will not believe.' That's the wise. But He reveals it to babes; the ones who by faith accept faith in a Holy God that always transcends their understanding. That's a baby. Now why did Jesus praise the Father for doing it that way? It doesn't compute to the natural mind. Jesus' only explanation is, "For it was well pleasing in Thy sight." In other words, the Father wanted to do it that way. And that was good enough for Jesus; and He rested in that.

So when it comes to issues like the Trinity, I think that is how we are to be. We seek to understand what God has revealed to us, but the secret things which He has not revealed to us, we simply walk by faith in. We walk by faith, not by sight and He's given us plenty for faith, if not enough for complete sight. You've heard the childlike model of the various states of water; the liquid state which is what we call water, gaseous state which is what we call water vapor, and the ice which is called solid water. Now all have the same essence; all have the same chemical formula; all are various expressions of water under various physical conditions. And that's okay as a model as far as it goes; no model though is ever the fullness of a spiritual reality. So no model can ever *fully* reveal God; the mind of man can go no further than God allows us to go. So we must not let the *mind of man* presume to limit the expressions of God. That would be to worship our *minds* and not to worship our God. So while acknowledging the limitations of models to capture spiritual truth, that doesn't mean that models are useless. So let's again turn to a model—to a diagram to summarize certain aspects of the Trinity.

Now the Trinity, revealed by Scripture, has two separate frames of reference. It has what I call the horizontal frame of reference and it has the vertical frame of reference. And they're expressed in Scripture in different ways. Now I used to argue with Susan about this and I used to use my rational mind to show the inconsistency of Scripture; and thus, 'Scripture cannot be true.' So what I'm testifying to you today, is again, part of my testimonial of having been broken out of the captivity of the human mind in understanding God. John 14:28 Jesus says – "The Father is greater than I." John 10:30 Jesus says – "I and the Father are one." Well, if two beings are one, how can one being be greater than another being; because they are identical. That's what 'oneness' would imply. So to the rational logical mind of man that doesn't compute; and therefore, becomes a reason to reject. Well, as you know from Scripture, the natural mind cannot understand the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. So I had to be broken, be shattered, give up faith in *my mind*, then be saved, indwelt by the Spirit of Truth, and then come back two or three years later and begin to be given understanding about how to regard these Scriptures. Because if you look at the horizontal line, the Father equals the Son equals the Spirit. There is not one of those persons of the Godhead that has more knowledge, that has more power, or that has more presence, or that has more sovereignty, or that has more transcendence, or that has more holiness. It is our *one* God in three persons. So, Father equals Son equals Spirit. So when Jesus says, "The Father and I are one", He's referring to the horizontal axis of the Godhead, in which the

three persons of the Godhead are equal in certain aspects to include their essential characteristics, their value, their purpose, and so on. That is to say, 'one God'.

But God, to reveal Himself to man, has also revealed another axis of the Godhead and that is the vertical relationship; and this involves such things as this. Philippians 2:5-8 summarized, says – 'have this attitude which was in Christ Jesus Who gave up the glory of Heaven, gave up equality with God, humbled Himself, became a Son of Man, to be obedient to death even death on a cross.' So when the Father gave the Son, it's not like He flagellated and whipped the Son into submission to make Him come; because they are equal in essence, in value, in purpose, and so on. The Son humbled Himself, did not consider the horizontal relationship of the Godhead as something to be grasped; and thus, negate the purpose and plan of the Father. He positioned Himself *underneath* the Father to only do what He saw the Father do, to only speak what He heard the Father speak, and so on.

Well, likewise with the Spirit, Matthew 28:20 tells us – to "baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit." Well, you don't baptize in the name of an inferior being when there's a superior being whose name could be baptized into. But Jesus goes on to describe the Spirit in the following ways. John 15:26 – "The Holy Spirit shall bear witness of Me, the Son." John 16:13 Jesus says of the Spirit – "He shall not speak on His own initiative." And John 16:14 speaking of the Spirit, Jesus says – "He shall glorify Me." Well, the Holy Spirit then did what Jesus did. He humbled Himself, did not consider equality with the Father or even equality with the Son as something to be grasped, but humbled Himself, positioned Himself underneath, in order to bear witness of Jesus, to bring glory to Jesus, to do only what Jesus told Him to do, to speak only what Jesus told Him to speak. Because Jesus said, remember, "the Spirit will give you that which I've given Him to give to you." So the ultimate in humility. Now I've heard it said that the Spirit is the shy member of the Trinity. But that, to me, is not a true statement. The Spirit isn't *shy*, the Spirit is *humble*. Because what we're seeing is the ultimate in humility of God Himself, humbling Himself, to occupy a position beneath God (if you will) to accomplish the *purposes* of God. So on the horizontal axis, the equality in the Godhead, we have such things as essential characteristics that I reviewed some with you: holiness, sovereignty, omnipresence, omnipotence, and so on. Value— it's not like one is worth more than the other; they're all of infinite value; and purpose— they are absolutely equal, united in purpose.

But in order to work out the purposes of God, the different persons of the Godhead position themselves in humility beneath the other person of the Godhead to work out the plan. So when the Spirit humbles Himself to the Son and the Son humbles Himself to the Father, they operate in different functions, by being in different positions in order to model how proper behavior should function. So, on the bottom you see that man—the Spirit works through man to bear witness of the Son Who's glorifying the Father to accomplish the purposes of God according to the plan of God. It's not only showing us and modeling for us the reverence with which God would have for God; because the Son says, 'I can't will and decree better than the Father can; so I will position Myself under the wills and decrees of the Father.' And the Spirit says, 'well I can't bear witness of

anything greater than the Son; because the Son and the Father are one, that's God Himself, how can I bear witness of something other than God?' So He humbles Himself, occupies the position, hidden for the most part in Scripture, in order to work out the plan of God by glorifying the Son, bearing witness of the Son and so on.

Well, if we see that's how God would regard God, that's also the model for how man is to regard God. And think how many marriages, for instance (this is not a talk on marriage and I don't want to stir anybody up; because it's a hornet's nest to bring it up in the church), but if marriages would simply recognize what's being played out here in the Trinity, there would be no issue. Because the wife who's called to acknowledge the husband as head of the home says, 'well I'm worth as much as he is.' Well, of course you are, in the horizontal relationship. You have essential characteristics, you're a born again child of God. You have as much value, you're to fulfill the purposes of God and so on, but the way that you do that is to humble yourself, position yourself under the husband as head of the home, just as the Son positioned Himself underneath the Father in the Godhead. Can you see? So it has nothing to do with *value*; it has to do with: How can the blessing of God best flow? So a wife, for instance, who rebels against the husband, insisting that 'I'm going to dominate, I'm going to have authority because I'm worth just as much as you are' and so on, is saying, 'I can bring about better blessings in this marriage and better blessings to humanity by rebelling against the system of God, than can flow from an omnipotent God if I position myself in humility underneath my husband as the head of the home'—and thus, function according to the plan of God for the home; and thus, let the blessings flow because of obedience and humility, you see. Can you imagine the rebellion in the Godhead if the Son had said, 'well, I'm not going to do that, Father? I'm not going to humble Myself before You because I'm worth just as much as You are.' So people who rebel against the system of God and rebel against authority, are in effect ignoring the model of the Godhead given to man as an example.

That also shows us how man is to regard man. We're called to submit to the civil authorities. We're called to submit to church leadership and so on. I may know, think I know, better than the person in authority in the church knows about what should be done. But the greater blessings of God will flow through me if I humble myself, position myself under the established leadership, and walk in humility according to the system ordained by God, than will flow if I rebel against the system because I think I know better than the system, you see. You may know more, you may know better; but when you walk in rebellion against the ordained authority positions of God, you will not see greater blessings flow *from* God. So there's a wealth of perspective in the Trinity, Itself. So, I don't expect you to walk out thinking I now understand the Trinity that I never understood before because the Trinity Itself, is a mystery. Who can understand one God in three persons? It's not a natural thing; it's a spiritual thing. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't milk it for what we can milk it based on the sum of the Word of God.

Next poster. Now having said that, this poster more or less draws attention to the vertical relationship, not the horizontal relationship. And I've selected certain words that capture how the Trinity functions in the three different persons. The Father, you see, wills and decrees. The Son, you see, creates and achieves. And the Holy Spirit implements that

which the Father has willed and decreed working through what the Son has created and achieved. And He does that by functioning on us by revealing and empowering. It's all God. But the Son, taking this vertical relationship, positioned Himself under the Father, says 'the Father is greater than I and will only do what the Father says, I'll only speak what the Father speaks; thus, I will glorify the Father.' The Spirit says, 'I will humble Myself under the Son, I will bear witness of the Son, I'll speak only what He gives Me to give', and so on. So He that serves the Son and glorifies the Son, while Son serves the Father and glorifies the Father. Now in regard to us, the Holy Spirit is revealing to me what the Son has achieved. The Holy Spirit is empowering me to function in the light of what the Son has achieved. And by accomplishing that, when the Son went to death on the cross, in regard to me, He is redeeming me, saving me. In regard to the Father, He is propitiating the wrath of God—that is appeasing the wrath of God. He is paying the price, atoning for the sins of myself. So certain things about the cross experience are directed from the Son up to the Father, and certain things are directed from the Son on his cross to me as a born again child of God. In regard to the Father, well no one can come to the Son except the Father draw him. And the Father says, 'Stop, no more of this, the debt is paid, the believer in My Son is now justified, now has the righteousness of Christ, Himself.' And thus, the Father says 'There is no enmity between me and the born again child of God anymore—it is finished, you see.' So the Father is drawing and then when He receives the payment, His wrath is appeased, the sin is paid for, He declares that the born again child of God who is redeemed by the Son, is now justified, fully righteous, and reconciled to the Father with no separation between them.

And well, what do I then do when I receive and walk in the light of these revelations? Well, I don't just keep it within myself; I then turn to the other human being out here who is lost, and I begin to speak what has been revealed to me. I begin to testify of what has occurred in my life. So I am testifying to them and teaching to them as God uses me as an Earthen vessel, as a living epistle, as an ambassador to represent Him—not for me, but to fulfill the purposes of the Godhead and His intent toward man, by walking out the purposes of God according to the plan of God, and so on, you see. So it's not about me, it's not about them—it's about *God* and what He has done with humanity and why, and so on. So I hope these two posters at least awaken within us some awareness and revelation about the Godhead and how it functions. But how cold and impersonal just a model can be. You know the way I depict it, it's just lines on a page. But it represents God. And then think that that Holy God of Genesis 1:1 has all of that energy of all of the persons of the Godhead directed toward me in one way or another. *None* of which have I earned. *None* of which *could I earn*. All by grace, which is the expression of the love of God. All flowing from the heart of God, focused on me, driven by His relentless love because He *is love*. He loved to create me and He created me to love me. Not because I am the center of the universe, but because the center of the universe (namely God) loves me that much. He simply would not leave me alone outside of Himself. He crushed me, He took pleasure in crushing me; because until I was crushed in my faith in *myself*, I could not have faith in God. So it was His good pleasure to crush me. Thank you, Lord! You see, that's a passion for oneness with me. That's the agape unconditional love of God. While I was a child of wrath, hostile to God, 'but God' took all of that energy of the Godhead, focused it on me to bring me into His family and into His kingdom. Now

that which flows out of the Trinity flows within the Trinity; because the Trinity is in the fullness of oneness—not just a *passion* for oneness, but *oneness*. So the passion in the Trinity is to *maintain* oneness. And that has always been maintained, except once. So let us explore the Trinity at that one time.

The cross of Christ. The Father wills and decrees. He willed and decreed that creation would occur, that man would be created in the image of God; that a plan for salvation existed before creation—the eternal covenant that’s spoken of. John 3:16 – “For God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whosoever believes on Him (the Son), should not perish but would have eternal life.” So the Father is sovereign. All are submitted to His decreed will, including the Son and the Spirit voluntarily, in humility. Now at the cross, the love of the Father for us and for Jesus is somewhat hidden and not called to our attention. But recall Psalm 119:160 – “The sum of Thy Word is truth.” The love of the Father is revealed throughout Scripture. We need only recall that the Father willed the whole plan of salvation; such was His love for us. His love for the Son is revealed throughout Scripture, culminating in the fulfillment of what love is all about—a passion for oneness when Jesus said, “The Father and I are one.”

Next poster. Remember the three essential characteristics of God. At the cross, the Father primarily demonstrates sovereignty and kingship in that all are submitted to His will—the Son and the Spirit. He also demonstrates love, but the love is hidden. The primary expressed essential characteristic of God the Father at the cross is that of the fierce but righteous judge. Remember Habakkuk 1:13 – “Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil and Thou cannot look on wickedness with favor” (as we learned in the talk about sin). God *cannot* excuse sin and Jesus (although voluntarily) has the sins of the world upon Him. The Father, thus, is perfectly revealed as the fierce but righteous judge, Who cannot look on evil with favor, Who perfectly defends the righteousness of the Godhead by pouring out His full cup of wrath upon unrighteousness. That includes the full judgment upon sin, of the lake of fire, the wrath of God, and the outer darkness of loss of communion with God. The Father is, thus, fully present at the cross, in His wrath, via the lake of fire, and fully absent in the total withdrawal of His mercy, grace, and communion—that is those things that flow out of His passionate love. And that is the outer darkness. The Father reveals how God would judge God if God had sin upon Him. He reveals that God would forsake God, if God had sin upon Him. He *hates* unrighteousness that much. But remember the beauty of that. That reveals at the other extreme that He *loves* righteousness that much. That reveals the Father to be one with righteousness and that reveals how faithful and true God is (as we learned in the talk on Hell—namely the beauty of Hell). Because if He hates unrighteousness enough for sin, He requires the lake of fire and the outer darkness of no communion, how much must He hate sin to have that be the price for sin? Well, how much then must He *love* faithfulness, righteousness at the other extreme? That which He hates with a passion at one extreme, He obligatorily loves with equal passion at the opposite extreme.

So what is the heart of the Father in all of this? What does He feel (since we love to talk about feeling)? Well, He is Holy, He is ‘other than’, and He’s too complex for us to think that we can judge His emotions fully. Now we try to do that; because we try to

allocate to God only one thought, one frame of reference, or one feeling at any one time. But listen to Him as we draw from the sum of His Word and listen to various emotions. The Father forsook the Son, the one with Whom He had always been one. The Father hated sin and sin was upon Jesus. The Father mocked at the Son's calamity as He poured out the iron rod of judgment at that which was hostile toward God—namely sin. The Father took pleasure in the pouring out of His unrestrained wrath on such a bundle of sin. The Father took pleasure in perfectly defending His righteousness and perfectly remaining one with righteousness. But also note Ezekiel 18:23 – “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” So, the Father took no pleasure in the death of the One with evil upon Him. The Father's heart was melted with pleasure at seeing such perfect love, faith, obedience, humility, and surrender as demonstrated by the Son. The Father's heart was broken at the suffering of the Son. The Father's heart was broken at withdrawing His communion from the One with Whom He had always been One. The Father wept with the One Who wept. The Father rejoiced at the accomplishment of His will. The Father rejoiced at the salvation of the world. The Father rejoiced at the defeat of Satan. The Father rejoiced at seeing sin properly punished. The Father rejoiced for the joy that was before Him; because He knew that His family was going to be expanded as a result of what was being done.

Now we often have multiple emotions simultaneously. And we often multitask. Yet when we observe God, we tend to behave as if He is capable of only one emotion at a time and of doing only one thing at a time; as if we can multitask better than God can multitask! So what did the Father experience at the cross? Well, first you have to tell me what frame of reference you're using when you frame the question. Then perhaps, I can make a cogent comment about that frame of reference. But I do know this...by faith, whatever the Father felt, it was holy, it was an 'other than' kind of feeling, the mystery of God. So I believe, though I don't insist that it be doctrinal for you (and when I do this, I'm giving one of my little hand gestures that I hold what I have, tightly and keep the other hand uplifted toward Heaven for the greater revelation that is sure to come). I believe that the Father rejoiced with the joy that was before Him just as the Son did as He went to the cross; that the Father wept at seeing such occur to His Son; that the Father suffered anguish in Himself, identical to the Son during the travail of the Son, for the Son is His *other self*, so to speak. And like Father, like Son. The Son felt the anguish of forsakenness; but even we as Earthly fathers know that when a father forsakes a son, there is also anguish in the heart of the father. So the Father felt the anguish of requiring Himself to forsake the one with Whom He was One and the One Who was perfectly walking out the will of the Father. We speak of tough love. My friends, this *is tough love*. And tough love *always* involves pain in the heart of *the one administering it*. So I don't think I'm expanding the heart of the Father beyond what the sum of His Word would allow me to speak. I'm not insisting, remember, that any of this be doctrinal for you; I'm simply trying to look at the Word of God, draw from the sum and go as far as I can go before a Holy God in regard to what was probably in the heart of the Father as He forsook the Son, in the darkness, on the cross.

So I think we'll stop at that point today. Thank you for listening, as always.