

## Welcome to OPEN

### WHAT it is -

Dictionary - adj. allowing access, passage; not closed or blocked

First of all - This night is a response to seeing so many young adults at Metro with HEARTS that are OPEN to the love of Jesus, MINDS that are OPEN to the Word of God, and LIVES that are OPEN to embrace the costs and challenges of the Great Commission and genuine Community.



**WHY it is** - We are living in a time when even professing Christians are abandoning the authority of Scripture and the clear-cut truths that define the Christian faith.

### [J.C Ryle on Jellyfish Christians](#)

*[Dislike of dogma] is an epidemic which is just now doing great harm, and specially among young people.... It produces what I must venture to call...a "jelly-fish" Christianity in the land: that is, a Christianity without bone, or muscle, or power. A jelly-fish...is a pretty and graceful object when it floats in the sea, contracting and expanding like a little, delicate, transparent umbrella. Yet the same jelly-fish, when cast on the shore, is a mere helpless lump, without capacity for movement, self-defense, or self-preservation. Alas! It is a vivid type of much of the religion of this day, of which the leading principle is, "No dogma, no distinct tenets, no positive doctrine." We have hundreds of "jelly-fish" clergymen, who seem not to have a single bone in their body of divinity. They have not definite opinions; they belong to no school or party; they are so afraid of "extreme views" that they have no views at all. We have thousands of "jelly-fish" sermons preached every year, sermons without an edge, or a point, or a corner, smooth as billiard balls, awakening no sinner, and edifying no saint. We have Legions of "jelly-fish" young men annually turned out from our Universities, armed with a few scraps of second-hand philosophy, who think it a mark of cleverness and intellect to have no decided opinions about anything in religion, and to be utterly unable to make up their minds as to what is Christian truth. They live apparently in a state of suspense, like Mohamet's fabled coffin, hanging between heaven and earth...and last, and worst of all, we have myriads of "jelly-fish" worshippers-respectable Church-going people, who have no distinct and definite views about any point in theology. They cannot discern things that differ, any more than color-blind people can distinguish colors. They think everybody is right and nobody wrong, everything is true and nothing is false, all sermons are good and none are bad, every clergyman is sound and no clergyman is unsound. They are "tossed to and fro, like children, by every wind of doctrine"; often carried away by any new excitement and sensational movement; ever ready for new things, because they have no firm grasp on the old; and utterly unable to "render a reason of the hope that is in them." ...Never was it so important for laymen to hold systematic views of truth, and for ordained ministers to "enunciate dogma" very clearly and distinctly in their teaching.*

### J.C. Ryle, writing in the 19th Century!

Over some time I have been struck by almost total neglect of DOCTRINE in the lives of professing Christians. I was especially stunned by conversations that our oldest son was having with his peers and

friends -- many of whom he had grown up with and went to Christian school with. They spent hours of on line dialogue working incredibly hard to blur the truth that is so sharply defined in the Bible. Today YOUR generation of professing Christians is essentially unclear on what it believes. They try to live out their professed faith; or measure their relationship to the course of the world around them not on the basis of fact and faith, but on the basis of feelings. They *feel* that if they are *perceived* as un-intellectual or out of step with the Christ-less culture around them that they will not have a voice in regards to communicating Christ. As a result they are easily coerced into surrendering truth just to get have a seat at the table and have a “**conversation.**” When they finally have the world’s permission to speak they end up communicating a Jesus that is undefined and a Gospel that is no longer offensive to the world -- but powerless to save.

We are going to embark on a series titled **CREDO** -

CREDO = Latin for I BELIEVE.

Jude -- a brother of Jesus and of James said this in his short letter

*<sup>3</sup>Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*

This series will follow the storyline of the Bible and define the essential doctrines of Christianity –  
DOCTRINE = WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE.

By the grace of God it will leave you able to say I BELIEVE -- This is WHAT I believe and this is WHY I believe it

IN the “Credo” series we will cover the essential truths of what Christians believe so that this generation of believers can withstand the constant onslaught of attacks on their faith and on God’s Word, and effectively live in and communicate

## **CREDO 1 - GOD IS - The Doctrine of the Trinity**

AUGUSTINE said - *If you deny the Trinity you lose your soul – If you try to explain it you lose your mind!*

Hopefully we will avoid both pitfalls.

You are going to need to THINK! You may not like school – you may have even flunked out of school - but tonight you are IN SCHOOL! Throughout this series we are going to exercise our minds in loving God!

Our world is filled with people who have a deep longing for God. People want to be loved. They want relationships – they want to belong. Technology is exploding out of the demand to be spoken to and speak - Cell phones - text messaging internet. If My Space were a country it would have the 5<sup>th</sup> largest population on the planet!

All of these DEEP LONGINGS are rooted in the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God

Man can NEVER rise above his concept of God.

He is the highest and deal and purest example. A faulty view of God results in human suffering.

There is NOTHING more important than answering the question - *Who is my God? Who do I believe in? Who do I worship? Who do I hope to see in eternity?*

Tonight’s subject is all about who God is. We will see that Bible plainly declares that God IS and the He exists as a Trinity.

The word *trinity* does not appear in Scripture. But the concept very clearly does.

The church father [Tertullian](#) (AD 155-220) was the first to use the word *trinity* in an effort to summarize the totality of Who God is.

**CRUCIAL INSIGHT:** To say that God exists as a trinity does not mean there are three Gods, or that one God merely manifests himself as either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit on various occasions.

**QUESTION:** WHAT is the Trinity.

**DEFINITION:** The Trinity is ONE God (monotheism) Who eternally exists (never a time when the Father, Son and Spirit didn't exist) and exists as three distinct persons

“Person” does not mean that God the Father or God the Spirit became human beings. Rather, it means that each member of the Trinity thinks, acts, feels, speaks, and relates because they are persons as opposed impersonal forces.

Further, each member of the Trinity is equally God, which means that they share the divine attributes, such as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.

Three distinct persons Father Son and Spirit who are each FULLY and EQUALLY God

FULLY = Each possesses the fullness of Divine Attributes.

EQUALLY = One is not more God than the other

SO - The Trinity is

ONE God - Who eternally exists as three distinct persons - Father, Son and Spirit - Each FULLY and EQUALLY God

The doctrine of the Trinity seeks to hold all of the truth that God says about himself in Scripture, such as the following truths, without dismissing or diminishing any truth.

**There is only One God.**

**CRUCIAL TRUTH: The Bible is clear from the beginning to end that there is ONE GOD.**

There are many people who say that there are many different religions, ideologies. But here is what the Bible says!

The Bible emphatically states that there is but ONE TRUE and LIVING God.

*Deuteronomy 4:35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him.*

*Deuteronomy 32:39 “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me;*

*Psalm 86:10 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.*

*Isaiah 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.*

*Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;*

*1 Timothy 1:17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever Amen.*

*1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.*

**All other gods are demonic false gods.**

**Many people will argue - Well - what about the other religions of the world that say that there are other gods? What are we to think of them?**

**Jesus spoke of - “. . . the only true God” ([John 17:3](#)).**

- The inference is clear - any other gods were FALSE gods.

The same was true in the Old Testament where every people group that surrounded the nation of Israel worshipped countless false gods.

The same was true in the New Testament - EXAMPLE: Paul (Acts 17) walked into the city of Athens and saw all kinds of temples and altars erected to the worship of all sorts of gods and goddesses.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE?

- This is going to be polarizing and controversial.
- Other religions other than Christianity worship demons

Very REAL - Very POWERFUL spiritual entities — fallen angels created by God — that joined Satan in his rebellion against the God of the Bible and are in opposition to the One, True Living God.

The Bible says that they masquerade as “angels of light” (2 Cor 11:14). They perform counterfeit signs and miracles.

We commonly hear that people describe themselves as SPIRITUAL! *“He/she is a very spiritual person.”* Or *“I don’t consider my self religious but I am very spiritual.”*

You want to be very careful to not be simply spiritual.

Because there are spiritual beings that love the God of the Bible and angels who love Satan and join him in his rebellion against the God of the Bible.

To plug into the spiritual world is to potentially plug into a demon.

The Bible says this in the Old and New Testament.

“They sacrificed to demons that were no gods” ([Deut. 32:17](#)).

OT people who went through all sorts of “spiritual” activity and rituals - but they did so to demons, not to God.

In the New Testament

“. . . what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons” ([1 Cor. 10:20](#)).

We must never think that other religions do not have powerful spiritual beings that they worship.

We must never say that they don’t have powerful spiritual experiences.

They can have very POWERFUL spiritual experiences – But the ORIGIN of those experiences is NOT the Trinitarian God of the Bible. Their experiences are demonic in origin.

Allah is a demon! He is different than Yahweh of the Bible.

When you see the bumper sticker: Love your mother earth - There is a demon called mother earth!

There are demons that PRETEND to be God and want you to worship them as God

And if you are just religious or spiritual you are participating with demons. Maybe some of you already are - or you know those that are. And your defense or their defense is that you have real and powerful spiritual powerful experiences.

Those experiences are REAL – but they are COUNTERFEIT.

You need to TEST the spirits

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God

See if they honor Jesus as the unique and Only begotten Son of God

**The term trinity is the way that theologians have articulated 2 truths**

1. There is ONE God
2. The Father Son and Spirit ARE God.

So let's see where the Bible says that the Father, Son and Spirit ARE God.

### 1.) The Father is God.

- John's Gospel - "God the Father" ([John 6:27](#)).
- Paul's first letter to the Corinthians - ". . . there is one God, the Father" ([1 Cor. 8:6](#)).

SO - The Father IS God

That the Father IS God is so generally accepted is seen that even the heretics of the Church got this one right. Even the cults see this.

The next is more debated

### 2.) The Son is God.

WHERE do we find this in the Bible?

([John 1:1, 14](#)). "In the beginning (an echo of Genesis 1:1) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . .

So whoever the Word is - He was WITH God the Father and He *IS* God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

So Jesus - God the Son -- was WITH God the Father and He *IS* God -- and He became a man.

- ([John 8:58](#)). "Truly, truly, I [Jesus] say to you, before Abraham was, I am"

It says in the next verse that the religious leaders picked up stones to kill him for having made that claim.

It says in another place that Jesus asked - "Do you want to kill me because I healed a man on the Sabbath? And the religious leaders replied - We don't want to kill you for healing on the Sabbath - but because you, being a man, have claimed t be God.

When Jesus said - Before Abraham I was, I am -- He was declaring that

He was from Eternity past God

He pre-existed Abraham -- He was Abraham's God

"I am" comes out of Exodus 3:14 where God spoke to Moses from out of the Burning Bush - Tell them that I AM has sent you.

Jesus is saying - I am God - -The God of Abraham -- the God of Moses

- ([John 20:28](#)). "Thomas answered him [Jesus], 'My Lord and my God!'"

- ([Rom. 9:5](#)). “. . . Christ who is God over all”
- ([Titus 2:13](#)). “. . . our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”
- ([1 John 5:20](#)). “. . . Jesus Christ. He is **the** true God”

## SUMMARIZE - THERE IS ONE GOD -

The Father is God

The Son is God

AND – so is the Holy Spirit.

### 3.) The Spirit is God.

The first thing we want to set straight is that the Holy Spirit is a “he” and not an “it.”

To call the Holy Spirit an IT means that you see the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force - that permeates creation

**like the pantheist** (God and the universe are one and the same - God is the tree / the tree is God)  
**or the panentheist** (meaning God is one with the physical universe and yet transcends it)

The Holy Spirit is NOT an it - He is a HE

The Holy Spirit is a person and not an impersonal force

The Scriptures ascribe to Him the attributes of personality

The Holy Spirit can be grieved ([Eph. 4:30](#))

An impersonal force can not be grieved - Gravity for example can not be grieved.

We are also told that He can be resisted ([Acts 7:51](#))

As the Holy Spirit seeks to INSTRUCT us and LEAD us and GUIDE us we can RESIST Him.

We are also told in ([Heb. 10:29](#)) that He can be INSULTED.

You can't insult gravity or electricity.

The Holy Spirit is insulted by lies and the promotion of false doctrine

So the Holy Spirit is a HE (not an it)

And the Holy Spirit IS GOD!

“Now the Lord is the Spirit (important - “Lord” is a title given to God), and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from (and he says it again) the Lord who is the Spirit” ([2 Cor. 3:17-18](#)).

- Peter is a pastor of the church - there is a couple in the church who decide to sell a piece of property and give a portion of the sale to the church - but act as if they were giving the whole amount of the sale to the church – Here is what Peter says to them
- “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? . . . You have not lied to men but to God’” ([Acts 5:3-4](#)).

## THERE IS ONE GOD

God the Father is God

God the Son is God

The Holy Spirit is God

Bring those together and we come up with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

## BEFORE WE CONTINUE CHECK THIS OUT!

WE UNDERSTAND LOVE in light of the Trinity!

We love the definition of God given in [1 John 4:8](#) - "God is love"

REALITY - APART from God we have NO IDEA what love is.

We think it is sentimentality - We think it is Sensual or sexual.

We DO NOT understand love until we go to the source of love - UNTIL we see what the TRINITY IS - and THEN we see what true love IS and what true love looks like.

I want to suggest to you that we this is another way of saying that God is Trinity and that the Trinity becomes the very place where we UNDERSTAND LOVE!

Some say that God created us because He was lonely and wanted someone to love

God lacks nothing.

He does not need us.

Within the perfect Trinitarian nature of God there was perfect love!

PERFECT Relationship - Friendship-Unity between the Father, Son and Spirit.

The statement "God is Love" only makes sense in light of the fact that God is a perfectly loving Trinity

We see this in the Gospel of John - where God the Son leaves eternity and enters into time as the man Jesus Christ – and as man Jesus said in [John 3:35](#), "The Father loves the Son," and in [John 14:31](#), "I love the Father."

The ESSENCE of the TRINITY is LOVE. Jesus says - The Father loves Me, and I love the Father.

THIS is so crucial in regards to you and me. Because we were made to LOVE and BE LOVED.

### **COMMON QUESTION: Do we see the Trinity in the Old Testament?**

Well let's start in the Book of Beginnings - Genesis - Because that's where the revelation of God begins.

Let's look at the first verse of the Bible

- "In the beginning, God (the word for God is Elohim – it is in the plural) created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And (who was there?) the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" ([Gen. 1:1-2](#)).

***IN the beginning God - First things first - you have to know who God is.***

**But what about** life and love and family and cultures and justice and human rights and economics and politics

**FIRST THINGS FIRST – And it is here that a generation is losing it's way!**

**They try to form a theology out of secondary things rather than form their understanding of secondary things from genuine theology!**

SO we have IN THE BEGINNING GOD –

We see God creating (we will get to this in our third time together.

Who do we see active in creation -- the Holy Spirit.

**Targum** - An accepted Jewish translation and reading of the Old Testament.

The Jewish scholars would translate and read the Old Testament and they would validate them as accepted Targum

In the Targum Neofiti -- which is dated over 200 years BC and 500 years before the council of Nicaea where the Christian theologians officially declared the doctrine of the Trinity as true orthodoxy.

## Here is the Targum Neofiti

*In the beginning by the first born* - who is that?

That is a term used in the New Testament speaking of Jesus (Heb. 12:23; Rev 1:5)

In Col. 1:15 Paul said that Jesus is *the visible image of the invisible God and that He is the First Born of all creation* - that is preeminence and rulership over all creation.

In the beginning by the first born (that's Jesus) , God (that's the father) created the heavens and the earth... and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

There were Jews living 200 years BEFORE the coming of Jesus who were waiting the coming of Jesus and believed the opening verses of the Old Testament to be Trinitarian.

That the Father - through the First Born, Jesus, along with the Holy Spirit -- created everything.  
TRINITARIAN

- Now look at Genesis 1:26 in light of what we just looked at
- “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” ([Gen. 1:26](#)).

That makes NO SENSE apart from the doctrine of the trinity.

WHO is the US and the OUR? God the Father - God the Son - God the Holy Spirit.

After sin entered the world

- “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of us’” ([Gen. 3:22](#)).
- At the Tower of Babel
- “And the LORD said . . . ‘Come, let us . . .’” ([Gen. 11:6-7](#)).

There are echoes of the Trinity from the BEGINNING of the Book of Beginnings.

**At the very least** we have in Genesis 1:1-2 God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

And we have Jewish tradition that says “We see Jesus there as well.”

## TWO OTHER PLACES in the Old Testament

There are tons but let's look at these two

- Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ “And now the Lord GOD [Father] has sent me [Jesus], and his Spirit” ([Isa. 48:16](#)).
- The Father would send the Son with the Spirit.
- This is exactly what Jesus said -- In John's Gospel alone -- more than 20 times Jesus said “The Father has sent Me.”

Then Jesus says in John's Gospel - When I leave I will send you the Holy Spirit.

ALL a fulfillment of Isaiah 48:16

- “The Spirit of the Lord GOD [Father] is upon me [Jesus], because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” ([Isa. 61:1](#)).

This is hundreds of years before Luke 4 -- Jesus reads in the synagogue of Nazareth -- and reads from

Isaiah 61 and says - "TODAY THIS IS FULFILLED in Me."

Jesus KNEW that He - as the second person of the Trinity - was fulfilling [Isaiah 61:1](#)

Here a few New Testament references to the Trinity

The Trinity appears, including the birth of Jesus

([Luke 1:35](#)) <sup>35</sup>And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy-the Son of God.

She was perplexed as to the MEANS of her becoming a mother and the angel told her that God the Father and God the Spirit would give her the ability to give birth to God the Son.

Matthew 1:20-23 "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, <sup>23</sup>and they shall call his name Immanuel"

The baptism of Jesus ([Matt. 3:16-17](#))

<sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

God the Father speaking from heaven.

God the Son coming up out of the water.

God the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus, anointing with power for His public ministry.

God graciously giving to us this wonderful family portrait of the Trinity.

The Great Commission of Jesus ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)).

After Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave for our salvation — -just before ascending into heaven Jesus said

<sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in **the** name (singular - one name) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

When we baptize new believers we baptize them in the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit.

### **We also see defined for us the Trinity in It's economy**

Theologians spoke of the IMMINENT Trinity and the ECONOMIC Trinity

The IMMINIENT Trinity is how God is within Himself

The ECONOMIC Trinity is how God works in history.

### **In regards to our salvation we can see the ECONOMIC Trinity.**

We see the Trinity working in harmony - working in agreement - but each Person of the Trinity has a role to play

1 Peter 1:2 <sup>2</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:

God the Father foreknew whom He would save.

God the Son came and shed His blood for our sins.

God the Holy Spirit takes up residence within us to accomplish the work of sanctify us, cleanse and conform us to the image of Jesus.

**READ** EPHESIANS 1:1-13 -- You must bare in mind that it is grammatically one unit of thought - and in it you see the ECONOMY of the Godhead in our salvation

Paul said that

IN LOVE the Father predestined us unto salvation before the foundation of the earth

That the Son came to this earth to die in our place for our sins and that He rose for our salvation.

And that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian regenerating their heart and renewing their mind and that the Holy Spirit Himself is the seal upon our lives guaranteeing our salvation

**ALL** *to the praise of the glory of His grace.*

**CRUCIAL:** We know live BY the Spirit THROUGH the SON and TO the father.

**The entire Christian life is Trinitarian!!**

**THIS DOCTRINE** is so SUBLIME yet it is so PRACTICAL.

**Jude** - We are to CONTEND EARNESTLY for this faith BECAUSE God does not change – the TRUTH does not change.

**What is the HISTORY of the doctrine of the Trinity.**

Justin Martyr, Tertullian Irenaeus and Basil all taught and defended the doctrine

Tertullian is one of the first to use the language of the trinity to describe all that Bible says about ONE God - THREE Persons, Father, Son and Spirit Eternally equal in every way.

SOME SAY - It took a long time for the Doctrine of the Trinity to develop.

I believe that it was held to (the internal evidence and harmony of the Old and New Testament Scriptures)

But it was questioned by some -- there were heretics and false teachers so there needed to be CLARIFICATION.

It wasn't a matter of taking a long time for it to develop.

REALITY is that for 300 years Christians were being fed to wild beats, burned alive and crucified – Pastors were being beheaded -

It is hard to crank out a systematic theology in that culture. Evangelism and survival is at the top of the to-do list!

ONCE persecution died down they started to clarify their beliefs.

At the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD where they clearly articulated the doctrine of the Trinity.

Constantinople - 381 AD - and they lay down the doctrine of the Trinity

Augustine of Hippo - One of the leading thinkers of the western world --- He spent 19 years studying this subject - so if you are feeling a bit overwhelmed in 60 minutes - not to worry!

He published his work "The Treatise on the Trinity" --- It has held up for 1,500 years!

TODAY - All Christians believe in the Trinity

Roman Catholics

Eastern Orthodox

Protestants

People say - *Well those Christians can't agree*

We agree on this one! There is NO disagreement on that issue

**THAT BEGS THE QUESTION** - What are the major heresies that contradict the doctrine of the Trinity

1.) There is Polytheism - There is more than one God.

One form of that is Tri-Theism - There are three gods

Polytheism includes Mormonism which says that there are multiple gods and that Jesus is man who became a god - NOT God who became man.

It is the same perversion and lie in the garden of Genesis where Satan said to our parents - "*You can become gods*"

2.) There are those who Deny that God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit are three distinct persons --This is known as modalism.

This heresy essentially says that there is one God who puts on three masks

In the OT he acts like the Father

In Gospels He acts like Jesus

From the Book of Acts forward He acts like the Holy Spirit.

But He is only playing one role at a time.

The problem with this is a text like Matthew 3 at the Baptism of Jesus (The Father speaks - Jesus comes out of the water - The Holy Spirit descends)

You can't play three parts at the same time.

The primary proponent of this today is the Untied Pentecostal Church. They deny the Trinity --They refer to it as JESUS ONLY. There is no Father Son and Spirit - there is JESUS ONLY who plays the part of the Father and the Spirit.

3.) Deny that the Father, Son and Spirit are Equally God.

Early on that was put forth by a guy named Arian who said that the Father is God but Jesus is not.

TODAY that is the heresy of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

**SOME ASK** - Why does this matter - These are OLD heresies.

Well - They are NOT – the Mormons the UPC and the JW's misrepresent God.

**Another current cultural example - THE SHACK**

Christians today are going nuts on the shack. The book is about the Trinity.

Mack goes into the Shack to meet God.

God the Father is portrayed as an African American woman named Papa.

Jesus is a guy of Middle Eastern Descent.

God the Holy Spirit is portrayed as an Asian American woman

I am not saying that you have become an apostate by reading the book.

But don't read it as doctrinal truth.

**Here is the problem** - Christians are saying - This is amazing! Now we understand the Trinity.

WRONG! Here's why

**FIRST** - One of the 10 commandments is (Ex. 20:4) **“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.**

Do NOT take the invisible God and try to make Him visible – Do NOT take the Creator God and try to make Him part of Creation.

Romans 1:25 says that Paganism is to exchange the truth of God for a lie and to worship and serve created things rather than the Creator who is blessed forever!

John 4 - Jesus said that the Father is SPIRIT - He does not have a physical body.

To try portray God the Father as an old man is a essentially very thing forbidden by Exodus 20:4

God the Father God is NOT an old man – aging as the result of sin.

We can make a picture of Jesus because God the Son came as a man.

At the Baptism of Jesus the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. So we can use the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

But to show God the Father as a human being is contrary to Scripture.

**SECONDLY** - It is goddess worship.

If God the Father is really God the Mother it changes everything.

Mark Driscoll - When Jesus prayed “Our Father which art in heaven” - He should have prayed “Our Mother

which is in the shack!”

God has revealed Himself to us as “Father.” It is WRONG to portray the “Father” as a woman.

**Thirdly** - The depiction of God in “The Shack” is Modalism (which is heretical)

Papa says - “I am truly human in Jesus”

THAT is not true. It is Modalism

The Father was NOT born of a virgin – did not die on a cross.

Jesus did.

Modalism says that the Father became the Son and became the Spirit.

The Doctrine of the Trinity declares that they are distinct persons

The Father SENT the Son. The SON died for sin. The Spirit was sent to regenerate and indwell us.

They are working together. But they are distinct.

The Father was not born of a virgin. Did not grow up as a Galilean peasant. Did not die on a cross and did not walk away from the tomb.

THAT was THE SON!

**LASTLY** - In describing the Trinity the book declares speaking of the Trinity - *We are in a circle of relationship not a chain of command. Hierarchy among us would make no sense*

Essentially says that there is no deference within the trinity.

Not True. There IS deference within the Trinity.

Jesus said - The FATHER SENT Me. I only say what the Father tells me to say - I only do what the father tells me to do.

There is EQUALITY but DEFERENCE within the Triune God.

That is where we get our understanding of the relationships between parents and children - husbands and wives – believers and pastors.

Children are not LESSER in nature than their parents. But they are to defer to them.

Wives are not LESSER in nature than their husbands - but they are to defer to them.

Christians aren't LESSER in their new nature than their pastors - but they are to listen to them.

The Shack essentially says that Hierarchy only makes sense where there is sin.

There is NO sin in the Trinity – But there is deference.

There is no sin among the angels who did not rebel against God with Satan - But there is clearly defined rankings among them!

The popularity of the book tells us that there is a HUNGER to know about the true and living God - a HUNGER to understand the Trinity.

But the book - rather than explaining and answering that hunger gives a heretical view of the Godhead.

HERE IS THE GREAT TRAGEDY!

Christians are so ignorant of the Scriptures that they ENDORSE it and SELL it to the multitudes as the answer to the BIGGEST QUESTION there is -- WHO IS GOD?

Many churchgoers today -- many of your peers - perhaps many here tonight -- say: Why do we have to go through all of this? Can't we just love one another? Can't we just serve one another? This sounds so doctrinal!

LISTEN! This night exists BECAUSE I love you! Because the leadership at Metro loves you.

**But I have to go back to what I said earlier.** Every deep and passionate and profound longing that you have can ever be satisfied apart from the Trinity!

We can not separate LIFE from DOCTRINE. Paul told Timothy to keep a close watch over himself and his doctrine! (1 Tim 4:16)

By referencing Mormons and Jehovah's witnesses - some say - You're picking on them.

No I'm not! If you are a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness - I LOVE you - and you are being lied to! You are worshipping a demon and I love you too much to let you do that!

Eph 6 - We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places.

Satan and demons are at work in this world to get you to believe in and worship something other than the Triune God.

We love you and want to see you experience Trinitarian life!

There is NO LIFE apart from connection to the Trinity.

**Which brings us to this -**

**LIFE is Trinitarian.**

When my sins are forgiven - the Holy Spirit comes to live within me bringing me into fellowship with God.

ALL of my life is now TRINITARIAN! All of my worship - all of my prayer - all of my ministry - is BY the Spirit - THROUGH the Son - TO the Father.

THAT is all of life.

There is a POWER source - a LOVE source - God the Holy Spirit living within me enabling me to live THROUGH the Son - TO the Father!

**TRINITARIAN LIFE IS LOVING**

Some people say - We don't NEED doctrine - we just need to love!

Listen - Unless you know WHO love is - WHAT love is - WHERE love comes from - HOW are you going to go out and love.

There are guys here sleeping with their girlfriend and they are calling it love.

That is not Trinitarian love -- it is demonic love!

Trinitarian love is for the cherishing and serving of the other - not using.

The Trinity love perfectly and fully.

The early church fathers used the word **Perichoresis**

The root of the word is choreo - we get our word get Choreograph from it.

Dancing -- They used the word to speak of the Trinitarian dance of God.

Their life as one God is like a dance of joy and life and gladness.

They used the word to say that we are able - by the grace of God - to enter into the dance of God.

God loves us -- We love Him - and we enter into the dance - WITH GOD! And that is **LIFE** on this earth!

TRINITARIAN life is LOVING!

### **TRINITARIAN LIFE IS COMMUNAL**

We are going to get to this in depth in one of our next studies.

When God made the world he saw that there was ONE thing that was NOT good!

It was not good for man to be alone

LONELINESS -- ISOLATION -- is not what God intends.

Relationship -- community -- friendship -- connection -- THAT is what God intends

WHY? Because that is what God IS. The Trinity is a loving relational community!

Trinitarian life is TOGETHER - as the Father, Son and Spirit are one.

### **TRINITARIAN LIFE IS TRANSPARENT**

The Father Son and Spirit have no secrets. They have hidden nothing!

Trinitarian life has no duplicity. It is not one thing with one group and another thing with the next group.

It is one person all the time.

That means that we will be open and honest about our sins and failures - hopes and aspirations.

The doctrine of the Trinity has so much practical application!

### **TRINITARIAN LIFE IS HUMBLE**

**Did you know that** - There was never a day when Jesus was jealous of the glory that the father received. (*They all went away glorifying God*)

**Did you know that** - There is never a day when the Name of Jesus is preached and exalted that the Spirit is jealous or covets that glory.

The Father, Son and Spirit live to serve and exalt one another.

That is why Jesus could say - Not My will but Your will be done!

TRINITARIAN LIFE is HUMBLE.

It is about the glory of God and the good of others.

THAT is why Jesus said - *When you lose your life - That is when you find it.*

### **TRINITARIAN LIFE IS SUBMISSIVE**

Again - we will get into this in depth in one of the upcoming studies.

If you are defiant you are not Trinitarian - you are Satanic.

It was Satan who came to our parents and said - You don't have to submit to God. You're pretty smart and I think you should do what you want to do - not what God wants you to do."

THAT is Satanic!

A lot of churchgoers are living Satanic lives - Not submitted to your parents - not submitted to godly authority.

*I can't trust anyone other than me - I can't follow anyone other than me -- because I don't believe that anyone is better than me*

THAT is not Trinitarian - It is demonic.

Jesus did not have that attitude.

He went where the Father directed - Said what the father gave Him to say - Did what the Father wanted done - and He did it gladly!

**LASTLY -**

### **TRINITARIAN LIFE IS HAPPY**

Did you know that within the Trinity there is matchless and limitless joy?

WHY? Because there is NO sin - NO jealousy - NO lying - NO hiding - NO blaming -- There is just LOVE

Perfect love -- Perfect Unity - Perfect communication -- Perfect connection

In and of Himself -- what theologians call the IMMINENT TRINITY -- God is the most happy person that ever existed.

And yes -- our sin does grieve God -- it should grieve us.

But in great love and in great joy, the Trinity decided to save us.

And the Father decided to send the Son.

And the Son agreed to come and live and die and rise

And the Spirit was sent to be present with us and to do a work in us and to do a work through us.

We have the opportunity to repent and believe this glorious good news – and should we do that we will enjoy a truly Trinitarian life that flows from all that the Trinity is and does.

Metro exists to bring you into relationship with the Trinity and to participate in Trinitarian life. It is more than just coming to this thing called Metro – but you being Metro.

## For Further Study

[The Westminster Confession of Faith](#) (1647) summarizes the doctrine by saying “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.” Wayne Grudem defines the doctrine of the Trinity as follows: “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God” (Grudem, [Systematic Theology](#), p. 226). Bruce Ware provides another helpful definition: “The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God’s whole and undivided essence belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct Persons of the Godhead.” (Ware, [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit](#), p. 41). Louis Berkhof explained the doctrine of the Trinity under these headings:

1. There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence.
2. In this one Divine Being there are three Persons or individual subsistences: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons.
4. The subsistence and operation of the three persons in the divine Being is marked by a certain definite order.
5. There are certain personal attributes by which the three persons are distinguished.
6. The Church confesses the Trinity to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man. (Berkhof, [Systematic Theology](#), pp. 87-89)
  - [The Trinity](#) by Roger E. Olson and Christopher A. Hall (163 pages) is a helpful overview of the history of the Trinity in church council, creeds, and theologians.
  - [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit](#) by Bruce Ware (176 pages) is a solid basic introduction to the Trinity and also a very practical examination of how it sets the pattern for human relationships including marriage.
  - [The Forgotten Trinity](#) by James White (224 pages) is a solid introduction to the doctrine and history of the Trinity.
  - [Making Sense of the Trinity](#) by Millard J. Erickson (112 pages) is a good introduction and overview of the Trinity.
  - [“The Biblical Basis of the Doctrine of the Trinity”](#) from Christian Research Institute
  - [“Tampering With the Trinity: Does the Son Submit to His Father?”](#) by Bruce Ware
  - [“The Trinity, the Definition of Chalcedon, and Oneness Theology”](#) by James White

[“The Nature of God - The Tri-Unity of God”](#) by James White

   [Share](#)