

**The Trinity:
Love at the Root of Things
Sermon Outline**

*Luke 3.15-17, 21-22; 4.1-2, 13-19, 31-37
John 17.1-5, 24-26*

Introduction: Knowing that God is Triune gives us at least two incentives for loving, by (i) declaring that love is at the center of things, and (ii) showing us what the love at the center of things looks like.

I) Love is at the center of things

John 17.5, 24: ...glorify me ...with the glory that I had with you before the world existed...You loved me before the foundation of the world.

A) The whole drama of the Bible's story is a playing out of the love that has always been

Luke 3.22: You are [already] my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased

B) Explains why love is so important to us

- Is love really just about sex and survival?

C) Whenever we work at love we are swimming with the vast and ancient current of life

- Always something valuable to do—even when everything else is caving in

II) The Trinity helps us to love by showing us what love looks like

A) Love refuses to seize glory for itself

John 17.1, 4: ...glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you...I glorified you on earth...And now, Father, glorify me....

Let another man praise you and not your own lips (Proverbs 27:2)

B) Love delights in giving glory to another

Luke 3.21: You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased

Romans 12.10: Outdo one another in showing honor

C) Love gives itself in support of the other

Multi-directional support—mutual submission for the benefit of the others

Ephesians 5.21: Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ

- What do we do when love is not multi-directional?

D) Love delights in the company of the other

John 17.5, 24: Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before...I desire that they also may be with me...that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Dealing with people you do not yet enjoy.

Conclusion: Our love is not yet perfect. But it is a promise.

Questions for Reflection this Week

- 1) Of what practical value is the doctrine of the Trinity to you?
- 2) How do you respond to the following statement: “Love is really just sex and survival. It is the notion that we have developed to give emotional and social meaning to what is really driving us—which is the evolutionary drive to pass along our genes to the next generation.”
- 3) Reflect on the following statement: “The doctrine of the Trinity tells us that love between persons has always been. God did not create us because he was lonely and needed someone to love. He created us so that he could share with us the community of love that he already was and had always been.”
- 4) If love is at the center of things, love must be the most important thing in life. What this means is that no matter how tough and confusing life gets, there is always something important that we can do—because there is always someone to love. Make a plan to love someone today.
- 5) How does Proverbs 27:2 reflect the pattern of glory giving between the Father and the Son (see John 17:1 and John 17:4)? Why is it wrong and impossible to get glory for oneself by seizing it?
- 6) The members of the Trinity not only refuse to seize glory for themselves; they each delight in giving glory to the other members of the Trinity (see Luke 3:21, John 17:4, and Luke 4:14-15). Read Romans 12:10 in the light of this pattern. How do you seek to “outdo” others in showing honor to them?
- 7) Service among the members of the Trinity is omni-directional—each Person plugging for and enhancing the agenda of the other Persons. Document this from Scripture. Sadly, we often find that love and support in our lives is not omni-directional (as when a parent cares for a child, which is hard though understandable; or, when only one spouse gives to the relationship, which is hard and infuriating). What do we do in uni-directional love situations?
- 8) Notice how often Jesus alludes to the delight of simply being together in John 17:5 and 17:24. What does this tell us about the nature of love within the Trinity? What do we do when we find that we do not at all delight in the company of a fellow believer?
- 9) Itemize what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have each done to address and deal with our failures at love. Spend some time in prayer thanking the Trinity for your deliverance from the guilt and pain of lovelessness.