

TITLE: Satisfaction in the Sovereign Source of Our Salvation (Part 5)

Satisfaction in the Trinity

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 1:2 and Selected Scriptures

THEME: The Doctrine of the Trinity from 1 Peter 1:2

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If it's one thing that I learned last week it's not to say at the start of a sermon that it will be on the short side length wise. I said that last week & several of you called me on it. I was a bit safe in saying that, however, since t/week prior t/message was something like 65 minutes. Last week's was about 8 minutes shy of that (wasn't really a lie; maybe a gross exaggeration, but not a lie).

Read Passage

Main idea ==>

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son.

This passage is one that reflects t/triunity of God. It a passage where we see all 3 members of t/Godhead actively involved in a creative work - that is, making us new creations in JC.

Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. We've said that this is a central aspect of our hope as believers==>

I. Hope in The Sovereign Source of Our Salvation

Tru Xns are t/only ppl. in t/world who have real hope. BTIM - we have a hope that is grounded in truth // will not disappoint // will w/o a doubt be realized in our lives thru JC.

Our Hope is in a Sovereign (God) who is the Source of our Salvation.

This is the work of the 3 persons of the Trinity - We have been==>

A. Selected by the Father (1:2a)

We have been (in the past) “chosen”

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

It is t/Father who chooses us to be saved from out from t/entirety of t/lost. He chose us before we ever chose Him (we chose Him because He chose us).

B. Sanctified by the Spirit (1:2b)

1. **ἁγιασμος** - basically means to be set apart as holy
In that sense, we have been set apart by God, in his eternal plan, to be holy unto Him. It's the work of the 3rd person of the Trinity - God the Holy Spirit - to draw us to X. It's what we call “Effectual Calling.”

Thirdly we see t/work of the 2nd person of the Trinity==>

C. Saved for Service by the Son (1:2c)

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father with the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience (saving faith) to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.

Progression or order to t/completion of our salvation: Father Elects; Spirit Sanctifies; Son Saves. Entirety of the Trinity was at work w/express purpose of securing your salvation.

D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity

The subtitle for this morning's message: **Satisfaction in the Trinity** (rest, joy, gratification).

1. This doctrine is at the heart of orthodoxy

2. Said last week that it is unfortunate that this doctrine is at the top of the most neglected teachings in Xnty

One writer calls it the “forgotten Trinity” [James White] Another theologian

writes that the Trinity, like any other doctrine, “needs only to remain untaught for one generation to be lost.” [Lewis, 287]

That same writer attributes some of the neglect to modern Fundamentalism which has basically ignored the doctrine. I would add the modern, entertainment-oriented seeker movement in t/CH that tends to neglect anything that goes beyond a 6th grade level.

As a result, the CH has fallen prey to the very prediction of what would happen if we didn't do a good job equipping the saints (Eph. 4) ==> We've become ==>

... children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, [and] by the trickery of men

That's why I said last week that sometimes CH leaders & theologians sadly joke that most of t/people in t/pews are Arians, Modalists and Pelagians -- all ancient heresies that are evident when unknowing people in CH's say things like - “Jesus is the Son of God, but not God.” (Arianism). Or, “Everyone is basically born good” (Pelagianism). Or “The trinity is like a man who is a father, a son, and an uncle.” (modalism).

People in t/pew have a gross misunderstanding of theology because t/CH has been so neglectful of teaching anything. As Eph. 4 says, we're to equip t/saints so that they don't fall pray to every wind of false teaching/doctrine. Rather than equip we entertain.

One writer puts it this way==>

"Our assignment as churches is not to create a Wal-Mart Community Church, where the aisles are wide, the merchandising is slick, the message is comfortable, and the price of salvation is a little cheaper." [Marion D. Aldridge, cited in Prokope, newsletter of Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Baker Book House, Vol. 2, No. 3]

MacArthur contends that "Worship services in many churches today are like a merry-go-round. You drop a token in the collection box; it's good for a ride. There's music and lots of motion up and down. The ride is carefully timed and

seldom varies in length. Lots of good feelings are generated, and it is the one ride you can be sure will never be the least bit threatening or challenging. But though you spend the whole time feeling as if you're moving forward, you get off exactly where you got on." [John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ, 150-151]

So we just haven't done a good job of teaching much on t/central aspects of what it means to be a Christian (Trinity is at t/heart of that).

Add to this the fact that confusion that abounds as to what we mean when we say we believe in the Trinity.

Last week I said that it's interesting that cultists don't attack t/true doctrine; they attack a caricature of it.

I read one theologian last week who said much the same thing:

"Those who oppose the teaching regarding the Trinity usually have not taken sufficient time to examine what they oppose or to define the charge of contradiction, which they make against the doctrine." [Lewis, 282]

This is the cultists who come to your door and ask things like "If you believe in the Trinity then tell me who was speaking at Jesus' baptism when God said "This is my beloved Son?" What Jesus a ventriloquist?! Or, if you believe in t/Trinity then The Father God must have died on t/cross, so who was running the universe?"

Questions like these are misstatements of what it means that t/CH of X believes in a Triune God.

Had a couple people ask me, "So what is the answer to that question?"

We'll get there, be patient. It's worth the wait.

The Trinity is the highest revelation of God that he has made for his people. It is essential to embrace the doctrine of Trinity if we are going to embrace God in who He is.

White calls it "the capstone, the summit, the brightest star in the firmament of

To pervert or misunderstand t/Trinity is to pervert & misunderstand t/very character & nature of God. In a very real sense it's to take His name in vain and thus violate t/3rd commandment, since God's name is t/embodyment of who He is.

D. Parenthesis: Satisfaction in the Trinity

1. What do we mean by the “Trinity?”

Word “Trinity” from Latin *trinitas* meaning “threeness” [Packer, 40].

People who claim that the word's not in the Bible . . . Question is, “Is it biblical?” False teachers make a living out of taking biblical terminology and twisting it to mean something quite unbiblical.

I can take a biblical word and use it unbiblically (fulness) or I can take a word that's not used in t/Bible and use it biblically. Word “Lordship” isn't in the Bible, yet I believe that when applied to JC it's a biblical term. Many such words, including t/Trinity.

While t/Trinity conveys a biblical concept, a more accurate word is “Triunity” which encompasses both ideas of oneness and threeness.

a. Main Idea from vv. 1-2:

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son.

b. Main idea for what we will be studying together on the Triunity of God (three-fold):

If our Hope is Found in the Triune God then we must know and love Him in His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must know about His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must believe in His Triunity.

The 1st three words of this phrase will show you how important this is. If you're not sure what I mean, what if I would have said "True believers will be premillennial as to eschatology?" Or "True believers will not practice infant baptism?" Or, "True believers will celebrate the Lord's Table every week?" "True believers will have churches led by pastor-elders?" "True believers will only have male deacons."

We're talking about a nonnegotiable issue here. The Doctrine of t/Trinity sits at the throne of God along with other nonnegotiable doctrines such as salvation by grace alone thru faith alone, the full deity and humanity of JC, the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of X.

To know t/God of the Bible is to know a Triune God. To deny a Triune God is to deny t/God of the Bible (thus to deny one's own salvation).

"The goal of the Christian life, including the goal of Christian study and scholarship, is always the same: Jesus Christ, 'in whom are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Do we long for a 'true knowledge' of Christ? When we sing, 'Lord, I want to know you,' do we really mean it, and then take advantage of the ways He has given us to attain this 'true knowledge' of Him? To know Christ truly is to know the Trinity, for God has not revealed himself in such a way as to allow us to have *true* and *balanced* knowledge of the Father outside of such knowledge of the Son, all of which comes to us through the Spirit. A person who wants to 'know Jesus' must, due to the nature of God's revelation, know Him as He is related to the Father and the Spirit. We must know, understand, and love the Trinity to be fully and completely Christian. This is why we say the Trinity is the greatest of God's revealed truths." [White, 15]

If that's true (and it is) then we must do what we can to know God is His fulness. If we say we love Him, then, as the saying goes, to love Him is to know Him. If I say "I love my wife," yet put forward no effort to know about her, what she's like, what she desires in life, what drives her personality, etc. my love rings quite hollow.

a. Scholarly Definitions of the Trinity:

There is one only and true God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three coeternal and coequal Persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence [James Orr, ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. This was expressed by the Council of Constantinople as "one *ousia* in three *hypostaseis*."]

“While there is only one divine nature there are three subsistences or persons called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who possess not a similar but the same numerical essence and the distinction between them is not merely nominal but real.” [John Dick Lectures on Theology, cited by Cook, 126]

“A) There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence (*ousia, essentia*). B) In this one Divine Being there are three Persons or individual subsistences, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. C) The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons. D) The subsistence and operation of the three persons in the divine Being is marked by a certain definite order. (e) There are certain personal attributes by which the three persons are distinguished. F) The Church confesses the Trinity to be a mystery beyond the comprehension of man.” [Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 87-89]

“There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence . . . The term ‘essence’ refers to God’s essential being or nature. . . . In this one being there are three persons or three individual subsistences—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are to be viewed as personal self-distinctions in the divine essence or substance. . . . The whole undivided essence of God belongs to each of the three persons. Thus there is no subordination regarding the essential being of any person, although . . . there is an economical or administrative subordination.” [W. Robert Cook, 130]

God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God” [Grudem, 226]

b. Simple Definition of the Trinity:

“God is One as to Essence, Three as to Person.”

Not “Gods are” but God (one) is. Not one person and three persons (contra.) not one essence and three essences (contra.) but [^] (1 essence - 3 persons)

Before we get into the biblical support for the Triunity of God I thought it may be good to spend a moment in looking at the doctrine historically.

IOW - How did the CH t/o its history understand this doctrine and why?

2. The Trinity in History

Safe to say that t/Xn CH from its earliest times to present has uncompromisingly believed & taught that God is a Triunity of F, S, & H.S. - Even if, early on that belief was implicit rather than explicit.

a. This was really a by-product of the Church's belief in the oneness of God and the deity of Jesus Christ

CH upheld what t/Jews were taught in t/OT - that God is one. There is no other (we call this 'monotheism'). But, then, what do you do w/the Messiah? The one who called himself God; the great "I AM" of Jn. 8:58

The first thing that the CH this side of the Apostles dealt with was who X was and is.

(1) Cults are nothing new

Had them in 1st and 2nd c. Groups such as t/docetists and the gnostics who denied that JC was God in the flesh.

False teachers were so pervasive in t/4th c. that Gregory of Nyssa wrote about how they could be found everywhere: "Every place in the city if full of them: the alleys, the crossroads, the forums, the squares. Garment sellers, money changers, food vendors—they are all at it. If you ask for change they philosophize for you about [the nature of Christ]. If you inquire about he price of bread, the answer is that the Father is greater and the Son inferior. If you speak about whether the bath is ready, they express the opinion that the Son was made out of nothing."

Be like stopping at Wegmans & after you ask for a lb. of salami from t/deli manager he doesn't respond w/"how thin would you like that cut" but "Jesus was only a man." Then you head over to Walmart and the gal in t/photo dept. doesn't say, "matte or glossy finish" she says, "The Trinity is a pagan belief." You next go to McDonald's and pull into t/drive through. Instead of hearing "Welcome to McDonald's, May I take your order" you hear "Welcome to McDonald's, "Our big Macs are not

eternal and neither is JC.” (if you were at the drive thru what you would prob. hear is “garbled, garbled . . .”).

Satan has been at work from the beginning of time. False teachers plagued Israel // CH (from t/time of X thru t/Apostles, onward).

(2) The focus early on was person & work of Christ

False teachers weren't focused so much on God t/Father or on t/Holy Spirit. Focused their attacks on JC by denying that he was truly human, or by denying that he was truly God.

For example, the Gnostics of 2d c. claimed that X was not truly human, for being human would have meant that he was sinful. So they said he just appeared human. This, of course, turned t/work of X into an illusion: If he just appeared to be human he also just appeared to suffer and die. If he only appeared to suffer and die, then those who believe in such a Savior would only appear to be saved!

The CH responded by refuting these errors which, in turn, caused t/CH to formulate what in fact the Bible taught about X in his person (who he was) & work (what he came to do).

(3) No doubt that the Early Church was Trinitarian

Even if they were implicitly so at t/first. IOW - they hadn't formulated their belief into a systematic whole.

Same way w/their belief that JC was God. They believed it even though they hadn't formulated that belief into a systematic doctrine, examining all of the implications of that belief.

But it almost always takes attacks against a doctrine to force those who uphold t/truth to define it. IOW - CH councils, creeds, doctrinal statements, position papers and the like are in response to false teachers and false teachings. It took heretics like Marcion who denied t/authority

of t/OT and much of t/NT (limiting his NT to most of Paul's letters and Gospel of Luke) to bring t/CH together at Carthage to affirm t/which books of t/Bible are indeed canonical.

ISW - it was attacks against true doctrine which compelled t/CH to put in writing what it is that it believes and defends about issues such as who Jesus is and the Trinity.

Some cultists & false teachers will say that t/CH made up t/doctrine in t/3rd or 4th c. - even claiming that t/CH borrowed from pagan Gk. thought or from Hinduism or Buddhism. Simply not true. For 1 thing t/test of any teaching is whether it is found in Scripture. God's Word always trumps CH history & councils. However, we do find that t/post-apostolic CH did uphold t/Trinity - we have evidence that dates as early as t/first part of t/2nd c. (a generation w/i t/Apostles).

The Letter of Barnabas, dated to t/early 2nd c. affirms "a Trinity of God t/Father, Christ t/preexisting Lord and Judge, and the Holy Spirit who prepares hearts for salvation." [cited in Lewis, 255]

Athenagoras (c. 177) who defended the doctrine as an essential part of t/faith of t/CH.

Later in the 2nd c. AD ==>

The Didache (teaching) a document discovered in the late 1800s in Constantinople indicates that t/CH believed in a Triune God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

2nd c. theologian, Theophilus, was t/1st to use t/term "Trinity" (trias) of t/Godhead (FSHS). [cited in Lewis, 255]

Irenaeus (c. 190) wrote against t/heresy of t/Gnostics and claimed that the one Creator and Redeemer God subsists as Father, Son, and Spirit.

Tertullian (c. 200) wrote extensively on the Trinity. He claimed that

God is a unity of substance, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit distinct divine persons w/i t/substance of the one God. [cited in Lewis, 255]

(4) Early in 4th c. a man by name of Arius shows up

He was an elder in Alexandria who came to t/false conclusion that, “If the Father begat t/Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this is it evident that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows that he had his subsistence from nothing.” [New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, s.v. Arianism]

Arius was quite a promoter so he had his favorite slogan set to a popular tune and soon half of Alexandria was singing “There was a time when the Son was not.”

Arius had his thorn in the flesh, a dwarfly-looking young man w/dark skin and a red beard by name of Athanasius. It’s been said that Athanasius could have been the patron saint of stubbornness. Athanasius, only in his early 20s, was Bishop of Alexandria. According to history, Athanasius never gave up on anything. He once grabbed the bridle of the Roman Emperor Constantine’s horse and refused to let it go until Constantine conceded a theological point.

By God’s providential plan, Athanasius also would not give up his opposition to Arius which led to Arianism being branded heresy at the councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381)

The result was a statement that reads==>

“We believe in One God, the Father almighty . . . ; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father. . . . And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, who proceeds from the Father. Together with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.”

Then you have St. Augustine who was t/most prolific at that point in writing about t/Trinity. He composed his masterful work *De Trinitate*, between 399 and 419.

(5) We could go on

To the middle ages with men like Thomas Aquinas, & t/Reformation with Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, Tyndale. All of these men upheld t/belief that God is one in essence and three in person.

A position that is upheld in t/more recent confessions of faith, such as the Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1530) and Formula of Concord (1577); The Anglican 39 articles (1563), the Westminster Confession of 1646 and the 1689 Baptist Confession.

It's reflected in our own doctrinal statement which says that we at Clarkson Community Church **believe in one sovereign God who exists as three coeternal, coequal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit**

b. We said that the test of any teaching is whether it is biblical

Creeds, councils, the collective teaching of t/CH is important and carries weight. CH is t/pillar and support of t/truth & creeds councils show how God has been at work in history in building His CH. But creeds are still bound to t/plain teaching of Scripture and are therefore only useful in as much as they are biblical themselves.

This is how we are going to attack this issue from God's Word==>

3. Three Essential Elements of the Triunity of God

We could call these "three pillars of the faith." We will see that false teaching comes from perverting or denying any one of these three pillars. Each one must stand or they all will fall.

Here's a preview . . .

Pillar #1==>

a. God is one as to Essence (God is One in Unity)

Pillar #2==>

b. God is Three as to Person (God is Three in Distinction)

Pillar #3==>

c. Each Person is Fully God (God is Complete in Each Person)

Main idea ==>

Our Hope is Found in the Electing Grace of the Father, the Sanctifying Grace of the Spirit, and the Saving Grace of the Son.

As it relates to the doctrine of God's Trinity==>

If our Hope is Found in the Triune God then we must know and love Him in His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must know about His Triunity.

If we must know and love Him in His Triunity then we must believe in His Triunity.

As the Athanasian Creed of t/4th and 5th centuries states, "He that would be saved must thus think of the Trinity."

So we're brought back to the central issue of our passage in 1 Peter

[chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father with the sanctification of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling with his blood.

Have you been chosen by God the Father? If you have rejoice in that. If you have rejoice also that you have been sanctified by t/Spirit to believe in JC that you may be sprinkled w/His blood.

If you haven't, or if you aren't sure, I would invite you to come to
t/Triune God. Turn from your sin and trust in t/eternal Son of God, JC.
believing that he died for your sin that you may live.