

# 'That They May Be one.'

by Art Katz

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*Art Katz emphasizes the importance of understanding the Trinity as a model for unity and leadership within the church, reflecting God's relational nature.*

**Duration:** 39:25

**Scripture:** John 17:21, Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 12:12, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 4:16, Colossians 3:17, 1 Peter 5:2-3

**Topics:** "Unity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not treating the preaching of the word of God as a mere ceremonial duty. He criticizes the idea of paying someone to fill a slot for a biblical presentation without truly understanding and honoring the divine intention behind it. The speaker calls for a revival and restoration of our understanding of God and His purpose for the church. He discusses the concept of the Trinity and how it relates to the church, highlighting the need for deference, humility, and self-deference to one another in order to experience the fullness of God's plan.

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## Transcript

Well, we all know that Jews, especially, and Judaism, as the expression of the religious view, is monotheistic. So also is Islam. In fact, it is only Christianity that holds the view of a triune God, a God in three persons.

And you wonder why that should be of any importance or significance, but I believe that it is. In fact, Jews are very quick to denigrate our faith as if we are worshipping three gods. And we know that there are even Christian sects that hold a monotheistic view, a Jesus name only, that think to correct our faith and to save us from the lack of embracing a doctrine that employs a word not even found in Scripture.

Triune is not even found in Scripture. But the early Church Fathers and the early Church Councils had already to deal with the issue of the concept of God and deduced from the scriptural references that Jesus makes of the Father and the operation of the Spirit, not only found in his own statements and in other writers of the New Testament, but also in the Old, that there is a basis to conceive of God as being triune rather than monotheistic. So I just want to say a few words.

I tried to do some homework with the materials available at Wynn's Place and jotted down some of the things of an article on the Trinitarian view in a dictionary. God is one in his essential being and three

persons, yet so as not to form separate and distinct individuals. Person is an imperfect expression of the truth as that term that denotes a separate and rational and moral individual.

The word person has got us into trouble. When we talk of God in three persons, we lay ourselves wide open for some credibility for the Jewish attack on the Triune view, as if God is three distinct gods. It sounds like a form of paganism rather than the deeper and truer apprehension of God himself.

The word person confuses us. So this theologian who writes the article on the Trinitarian view speaks about the word person itself being an imperfect expression of the truth that denotes or would suggest a separate and rational individual rather than three modes or forms in which the divine essence exists. Three personal self-distinctions within the one divine essence.

You kind of say, why bother? Why does God clutter the scene and bring a view of himself of an unnecessarily complicated kind? Because I believe that the glory of God in the earth is altogether relative to expressing here among ourselves what is the genius of God in heaven. There's a reason why he is. That he himself is comprised of three entities who have distinct callings and yet are related one to another in a way of deference and humility, so to speak, in the honoring of the other that brings out the fullness of what God is in himself.

And the fullness of the church will not be obtained except by that same character and that same pattern. Personality in man implies an independence of will, actions, and feelings leading to the behavior peculiar to the person. That's the way it is in the world.

You're an individual. You're a person. You've got your own will, your own mind, your own actions, your own conduct.

And that, of course, is going to be antagonistic to other persons and other individuals who have their view and their will. But this cannot be thought of in connection with the Trinity. Each person in the Trinity is self-directing yet never acting independently or in opposition to the other but rather deferring to and giving honor to the other.

Are you following this? We need to contemplate God himself because he says that when we are one as he is one, the world will know that the Father has sent him. The great prayer of Jesus in John 17 is crying for a statement in the earth that will reveal God in heaven as he in fact is. And a monotheistic view of God does not do him justice because it's not what he is in himself as he in fact is.

He's a God who is comprised of three forms and modes of the expression of his deity. All eternal, all sacred, all holy, yet having distinctly different functions and yet supplementing and relating to the other in a way through deference and submittedness and humility that brings out the fullness of what God is in himself. Can you imagine a church like that? That can only succeed in its diversity of persons because of having the same character as God himself, namely, humility, deference, and yieldedness to the other to bring out the fullness of all that appears in the body that relates in the same way as the Godhead does to himself.

That deserves a little water. Okay, I'm not saying any of these things to get fancy, look them on their hands, and that I enjoy being complicated, maybe a little bit, but I think we're stumbling on something. And if you'll patiently hear me out, I want to bring this little abstract discussion of the triune versus the monotheistic view of God to the practical question of the very heart of the church itself and its leadership.

What is the model of God? We know that in modern times, as my brother has so ably described, churches traditionally prefer a single pastor. There's a reason for that, an instinctive security that comes by believers of a certain kind that like to see the responsibility upheld by a single man rather than shared through a plurality of elders. Though the word pastor is elder, as my brother has described in the New Testament scriptures.

So, the substance and the operation of the three persons are marked by a certain order involving a certain subordination in relationship, though different in function and in nature. You know that we might just as well be speaking about the church as God by using those same words. The father originates, the son reveals, the spirit executes.

While this does not suggest priority in time or dignity, you don't say that the one who executes has a lesser office than the one who originates. Each person of the Godhead has a function peculiar to himself, but it's not less nor other than the other person who has another function. And in fact, there's no fullness of God except that each is faithful to fulfill the function for which that person is constituted.

Unless there's a spirit that executes, no matter what the father originates and what the son reveals, it remains in the realm of abstraction and does not become immediate and palpable and existential except through the power of that person of the Godhead called the spirit of God. Is the spirit of God less than the son of God? It's called the spirit of the Lord. So we need to revive and to restore, talk about restoration, our very understanding of God himself.

For the genius of the way in which he has constituted himself is not for some idle reason, but it has a profound practical implication for the church itself and for the fullness of what we are in our own diversities and callings that need to be fulfilled and expressed only by the same character and mode of yieldedness, humility, and self-deference to the other. We're having a little example of that with two men before you at the same time and place, deferring one to another, not knowing what the other is bringing, respecting the calling of the other that you might have the fullness of the whole mind and counsel of God in this appointed time. I can probably say with some confidence that if I had been called to this maybe as short as three to five years ago, there would have been a competitive edge, a little rivalry, and now Katz is going to come up and clear the bases by knocking one out of the park.

That brother was okay to get a man on first and second, but Katz is the cleaner pitter. There's something of that spirit in the immature church that is contrary to the composition and character and genius of the Godhead himself. And when we will resemble him in our own deferring one to another in the spirit of humility, in the desire to see the fullness of the glory of God expressed, we will have a church that is a glory unto him and the world will know that the Father has sent him for we will be one as he is one.

When you have a jealousy for this saint, you will, like me, be a watchdog fiercely against anything that purports to be working toward the unity of the body of Christ that is only an ecumenical fraud. A politicizing, a religious sleight of hand through Catholic and other auspices, working with denominations by thinking that if they give one another a hug or something like that, that has affected the genius of the unity of the body of Christ. I just came from England and I was invited to a conference on my last day, delighting to hear other men having heard myself too much for six weeks.

And the brother was speaking about the unity of the body of Christ and the young Scottish brother with me turned and said, what do you think is the unity of the body of Christ, Art? And I looked at him and I said without thinking, when the church will have attained the same quality and character of relationship as the

persons of the Godhead, we will be in the unity of the body. That's not going to be obtained by a bear hug. It's going to be obtained by sacrifice, death to our own egotisms and insecurities for which reason we assert ourselves instead of deferring to another.

That God is after something profoundly deep in a word, nothing less than what he is in himself. When there will be a conjunction in earth with the reality of God in heaven to be found in the church, his kingdom will have come and his glory will be revealed. There's a reason why God has constituted himself in the way that he has and we need to know it, we need to restore that truth, to be jealous over that doctrine and to see the practical outworking of it in the church.

The article said that the implications of the doctrine of Trinity, the Trinitarian view, are vitally important not only for theology but for Christian experience in life. God in Trinity is fullness of life, living in eternal relationships and in never ceasing fellowship. Whoever wrote that article, I praise God for him.

The whole genius of the Godhead is relationship. There's nothing static about it. It's an eternally active and dynamic thing between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a quality of relationship that is pulsating and mutual and deferring one to another in its continual activity.

The genius of God is relationship. But a monotheistic view is a static view as against a dynamic view that places the whole genius on the word relationship. I think going back to what was said by one of the most precious things I've ever heard, he said, God himself is a precious company.

Have you ever thought about that? You know what, you want to know something? We're sitting here subscribing technically to the doctrine of the Trinitarian view but we are effectually monotheistic in our mentality and in our conduct because the world has done a number on us to make the thing that is individual and static more the mode of our thinking and being. We do not have a corporate company mentality. We are ourselves a conglomerate of individualities.

We've brought a monotheistic view into the practicalities of the church. And so we've got to consciously break the power of that which is the spirit of the world, individualistic, me, mine, as against the view of God as a company, a corporate entity in himself, yet one. Profoundly one through relationship of a self-effacing and self-deferring kind, which is to say sacrificial, the one elevating the other.

If there is in God a diversity of life, may it not be reflected in the widely diversified forms in which life manifests itself? Moreover, that fellowship that constitutes the Trinity is the basis of fellowship within the human family, husband and wife, father and mother, children, within the home society and more especially within the church. The model that God gives of himself is intended not just for our casual contemplation, but as the very basis for the genius of what church is intended by God to be in its corporate character expressed also and especially in its leadership through a plurality of elders. So his sonship was the basis of our sonship, implying that we should live from him as we live from the Father.

Now I'm reading from my second sheet of scribbles called Implications of the Trinitarian View of God. And somewhere before going to bed last night, Jim will remember, he came into my room and I said something like, believers do not really have the faith to believe that they are to live from the Lord, from the life of the Son as the Son lives from the Father. But the unconscious tendency of many believers is to see Christ-likeness as unattainable.

Remember when Ron said, well be God-like tomorrow or Godly, we all kind of laughed up our sleeves. What are you asking, the impossible? No, he's asking the practical, he's asking what God himself intends. But we have a sense that this is unattainable and therefore we do not strive for it, and we're satisfied with a lesser moral and ethical life based upon principles, kind of a Judaistic Christian life, which when it's brought to an ultimate extreme degenerates into legalism and a false basis for life and distinction over others by superiority of our performance.

I'm glad this is getting on tape, I need to hear it myself. What am I saying, and if somehow this is related to the Triune View of God, that we ourselves do not believe nor apprehend the great dimensions that are available to us in the Atonement. We've only understood it as redemption from sin, but there's much more implied, namely a death to ourselves and an appropriation of a life that was risen and ascended and that that should be the basis for our overcoming in the world.

And because we don't believe it, many of us, as we have monotheistic views in actuality, have also Judaistic views in practice. We live by a kind of a moral code and by principles, and I think that this is the basis for which we move into legalism, because when you live by principles and by performance, then invariably you're going to find yourself better than another, and looking down with contempt on those who are not as principled as yourself, and it introduces into the Church the kind of leaven that brings control. It's a false basis for life and distinction, because it rests on performance.

This kind of Christian is most partial to Jews and Judaism, are secret admirers of those who are more adept at a system based upon works and merit than themselves. That's a little observation from me that might not make sense to you. But I would suspect that any believer whose life was not predicated upon the risen and ascended life of Christ, but rather on the basis of his own human merit and works, has a kind of fascination and respect for Judaism and for Jews and admires their accomplishments based on that very thing.

And loves to see them even to succeed on that basis, because it's the basis by which they themselves hope to succeed. And I'm moving toward that that mentality is very conducive to looking up to the platform and admiring and preferring a single man of faith and power. It prefers someone who will perform a function for them, because they do not expect to be capable of performing it for themselves.

They actually relish a justification by which they will be absolved of the responsibility themselves to be men of faith and power, and are willing to pay the bill for someone who can be it as an impressive chief executive officer who has flair and ability, so that they can rest in the pew in a kind of a laxity and passivity that no one's fault, for it is the mode and the norm of traditional church behavior. But to see four elders, or how ever so many, relating one to another in deference and in the expression of their gifts, invites you also to be participants in the genius of what the body is in its diversity and its working by one deferring to another, each having unique gifts and callings as do the persons of the Godhead. One originates, one reveals, the other executes.

Well you also have a like function, but if you have been lulled into a kind of passivity in which you are not expected to function, and that you can get off the hook by paying the bill of one who will, and function strenuously because he has admirable and visible qualities that relieve you of your responsibility, that's the mode that you will choose and prefer. Are you following me? But such a church can never eventuate in the glory of God. It might be impressive.

It might be numerical. It might be large. The person himself might be quite impressive.

But the people are robbed of the prospect of growth and of maturity and of the revelation, the revealing of God's glory through the genius of the corporate body itself. The issue of government is much more than just whether we're going to have a single pastor or plurality. It's the whole mode of being.

And the question is, does it reflect itself to Godhead, given as a model for our emulation on earth, or is it a model that more reflects the world in its penchant for chief executive officers who will do the job and get it done and command impressive salaries and benefits. They live luxuriously, and we see to it that they do because we believe that they deserve that lifestyle, seeing how they bear the responsibility that ought rightly to be ours. This kind of Christian who has this penchant for Judaism and is impressed with a works merit kind of thing that distinguishes Jews and even a nation Israel is also partial to celebrating souls.

Men who look like kings, who look heads and shoulders above the rest. Eminent models of religious success. The man of faith and power that they themselves cannot hope to attain, nor are they expected to attain.

But to admire at a distance and to give him the greater responsibility as is expected so that he might maintain and continue the church or the movement over which he is the singular head. I'm describing the normative model of church in Western society, completely antithetical and opposite to what it was in the beginning and needs again to be. We've got to recognize that we ourselves have acceded to this kind of worldly model because it absolves us from the responsibility of bearing the ark of God ourselves.

We like to let George do it, particularly if George is impressive and he can perpetuate our establishment, our church and our movement and we're willing to pay him handsomely for doing so. And he's only too quick to receive that remuneration as being just and right. Thus, that Christian is absolved from any true personal responsibility of a spiritually demanding kind which is also a spiritually transforming kind.

And expects to live a reasonably clean life morally, be faithful in attendance and especially in giving by which the usually more luxurious and deserved lifestyle of the senior pastor of men of faith and power is maintained. In a word, such a Christian and they are legion would rather pay than pray. And praying means the whole panoply of spiritual obligation.

It's the way of convenience that we rob ourselves of the very causative factors that would have to do not only with growth and maturity in this life but eternal and distinction and reward in the next. If I don't speak about this tomorrow sometime, you're going to have to invite me back. That's how important the issue of eternal reward is.

And I want you to know now, just off the shoulder, we're not all going to be in the same place in heaven. We're not all going to ascend to heaven at the same time. Some of us will not even attain to heaven.

And those of us that do will be in respective and different places based exactly and totally on our accomplishments and our works in this life. Those works, that is, that pass through the fire of God's judgment and are not burned up as hay within stubble. But if you have submitted to a system that encourages your passivity and mere peace-sitting and the absolving of your responsibility by putting into the collection plate, you have not the prospect whatever of eternal distinction nor reward.

You're being denuded and robbed. And Jesus had the most severe words for that steward who, when he came, had not brought any increase in the talents that he was given to oversee. And dear saints, every single one of you is given at least a talent.

And are we in a system that is man-centered, that frees us from the necessity of the nurturing and the cultivating and the bringing forth of an increase of that talent, or are we in an apostolic context that encourages it? It has everything to do with our choosing. So I'm just wanting to say that both our character as the Church in this life is affected by that decision as well as the eternal issue itself. And as I said earlier today for those who are not here, if we do not take eternity into our present consideration, how are we then the Church? And take it into our consideration in such a way as that it has practical consequence in this present life.

I'm persuaded that rivalry, contention, strife, ambition, splitting, divisions in the Church has everything to do with men whose locus is in the earth rather than in heaven. Something happens of a freeing and ennobling kind that comes into the spirit of the believer for whom the issue of eternity and heaven has been made real. We're somehow freed from pettiness.

We're freed from competition. We can then defer one to another. There's no jealousy.

There's no necessity to assert ourselves or to establish ourselves. Somehow the awareness of heaven and its reward and its magnitude frees us from the kind of petty striving that has made the Church a battlefield and a place for division and strife. I cannot reconcile how a Church that has a single pastor as the man of faith and power can also at the same time truly embrace the issue of eternity and heavenly reward.

They are incompatible. That kind of embrace of eternity can only function and be valid and viable in the context of an apostolic setting that has forsaken the traditional single pastor model and sees itself as participating in the genius of what the body is that can only function as the Godhead himself to a self-deferring humility of the one toward the other in relationship. As participating in the genius of what the body is that can only function as the Godhead himself to a self-deferring humility of the one toward the other in relationship.

So this system based on convenience and it is a system that allows the privilege and ease of mediocrity and late Saturday night TV viewing assures that one that what he is paying for will produce the next morning an acceptable and hopefully interesting biblically sound message called a sermon which he is not expected to heed but only to enjoy or to approve. It's not in calculated for his challenge but only to fill ceremonially a slot provided for a biblical presentation and we're willing to pay a man who can do that and do that ably. But dear God, dear saints, sermonizing and inserting the word in a ceremonial way that we can have some sense of having attended church, can you understand as a mock and a travesty against the genius and the sublime divine intention of God for the church that unto him should be a glory forever not only in this age but in the ages to come? How do we ascend to such a denigration of the church because it is convenient and all that it requires is that we pay for it? This satisfies the religious requirement that does not make any personal demand.

The whole mode of religious life does violence to the mystery of incarnation, robs the world of the demonstration of the Godhead, the vital relationship of the persons especially of the spirit reduces the whole level of the church to a pedestrian achievement, essentially the perpetuation of itself as a religious system providing predictable and minimal services. As a schedule that does not distract from the more vital and predominant worldly interest of its parishioners. Not bad for scribbling.

I've never heard an indictment of the church system with more surgical precision than what I'm now reading. It's no testimony to me but him who gave it. The believer as a passive pew sitter, as a dollar in the

collection plate giver, and it doesn't matter whether it's one, ten or a hundred based on your ability, it's still the way of convenience, is robbed of all prospects for growth and the attainment of spiritual maturity through significant participation in which he is also obliged to express the particular will of God through his own uniqueness and giftedness and call as each joint supplies.

Remember what Paul said? And when you come together, each one has a telling interpretation, a revelation, a prophecy. Paul fully expected that when the church assembled, every member would be functioning and providing the thing for which it was essentially gifted and called of God to perform that the whole body could receive the enrichment and the life-giving quality as to produce its growth. That's why he could establish such a fellowship, leave it, and come back two years later and it's not only just functioning but also prospering even before the appointment of Elvis.

Because each one, when they come together, is giving a tongue, an interpretation, a prophecy, a revelation, or whatever it is that the Spirit of God is expressing through the distinctiveness and the uniqueness of that vessel. Each one has. And if that was our understanding, do we dare spend Saturday night before the TV set to the late, late night, late, late hours, dulling our spirits, corrupting our inner men, nullifying any prospect of being sensitive to God's Spirit because we don't expect the next morning to have or to give a prophecy, an interpretation, a revelation, or a psalm or that which would enrich others.

We want to stay up late night watching the gaudy crut, feeling that we can come in any sleazy condition the next morning and look up to George and trust that he can do it. After all, he's getting paid for it. So to follow Paul's model of each one has and each one gives requires the maintenance of a clean vessel.

You cannot twiddle TV dials and be the instrument of God's use the next morning. And being in a continual communion with God, because it's out of that communion that comes the revelation, the psalm, the prophecy, or whatever it is that God would have you to communicate. And that kind of communion, that kind of relationship requires time and inconvenience, in a word, sacrifice.

So the believer who has forfeited that kind of requirement and prefers a single man model who will do it is assured that this minimum requirement is sufficient to assure him of heaven rather than hell, oblivious to the whole realm of eternal rank, reward, and distinction determined by the works performed by the grace freely given that passes the fire of judgment, as I've already mentioned. Simplistic Christians like that who are willing to pay for the man of faith and power and be absolved from participation and responsibility are assured that they're getting to heaven. And that's all they know.

They have no notion of what heaven means, that they have not understood that if there's an outer darkness, that there are inner places of light and affinity to God, and that that place of where you will stand is eternally fixed, altogether proportionate to what has been the quality of your conduct, service, and works in this life. You're paying an unbelievable price eternally for a passivity that is the consequence of a system that lets George do it, because you think that you're being saved from hell and you're going to heaven. You may be surprised that if God cast a steward into outer darkness where there's a wailing and gnashing of teeth, and that that steward is not a statement of one in the world, but one already called to the service of the master, we need not be too sure of what our eternal destiny is if we, like him, choose a life that is slovenly, casual, careless, and lazy and prefers to let George do it, that we might be absolved from the responsibility that would have earned us an eternal reward.

And there'll be a wailing and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness eternally, and that without remedy. Thus, while giving outward credo of affirmation to the doctrine of a Trinitarian God, the believer effectually lives,

in fact, monotheistically, separate, singular, individual, detached from others in the congregation, not able to recognize or participate in the mystery and the glory of the body of Christ. The same quality of deference and relationship between each member as characterizes the persons of the Godhead.

Denying the Lord the glory due him, and unto him be glory in the church, in this world, without end, and throughout all ages. The glory due him who gave his life for the church, and unwilling like him to give himself by the same eternal spirit. So he loses an abundant entry into the eternal kingdom.

The present life is made barren and unfruitful. The election and calling is not made sure. The divine nature is not made a partaker of.

He remains in the corruptions of the world, has not escaped lust. And the world remains unbelieving that the Father has sent Jesus. Those are the consequences of a church system that chooses to give its entire confidence to a single man who will perform the things necessary for its religious functioning, the perpetuation of its church, its movement, or its system, and absolves it from the apostolic participation that has everything to do with character, life, and eternal reward.

I want to end with a benediction from 2 Corinthians chapter 13, the last verse, because this benediction itself reflects the genius of the triune Godhead. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, you can almost imply the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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