

# The Centrality of the Trinity

by Erlo Stegen

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*Rev Erlo Stegen explores the profound mystery of the Trinity and its essential role in the Christian faith and experience.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:12, Isaiah 64:8, Malachi 2:10, Matthew 3:11, Matthew 12:32, Matthew 15:4-6, John 3:3, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:32

**Topics:** "Relationship with God", "Understanding the Trinity"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the mystery and centrality of the Trinity in understanding God, illustrating that while we cannot fully comprehend His nature, we can appreciate the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He shares a story of a theologian who realizes the limitations of human understanding when contemplating the Trinity, likening it to a child trying to pour the ocean into a hole. Stegen highlights the significance of the celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, which reflect the gifts of the Father, the sacrifice of the Son, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. He urges believers to recognize their relationship with God as Father through adoption and the necessity of being born again to truly call Him Father. The sermon concludes with a call to seek the Holy Spirit's power to be witnesses of Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Summary of sermon by Rev Erlo Stegen

We cannot fathom the depths of God. The Triune nature of God is one of those mysteries. The Bible gives us partial revelation. Enough is revealed to glorify God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There is the story of a certain theologian who struggled with the idea of the Trinity and walked up and down the beach thinking about it. He saw a little child continually fetching sea water and pouring it into a hole. Eventually he asked the boy what he was doing. The boy replied, "I want to pour the entire ocean down this hole." Suddenly it dawned on him that he was trying to fathom the greatness of God with his little mind, just as that boy tried to pour the ocean down his little hole.

God is Triune, but even that concept we do not fully understand. He revealed Himself to us as one God, there is none beside Him. He is God in three Persons, unique in each One and totally unified. The Jews reject Christianity because of the Trinity, saying that God is only one yet we Christians say that He is three-in-one. But even though God is three persons, yet He is one God, distinct in the Persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet completely one.

It is true we do not find the Word "trinity" in the Bible, but throughout the Bible we read about one God and we read about Him revealed in three Persons.

As I thought to speak about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit I realised that it was like jumping into the vastness of the ocean. I will barely be able to begin to describe His greatness and mystery.

In the Christian tradition there are three celebrations that stand out above the others.

They are the Birth of Jesus (Christmas), the Passover (Easter) and Pentecost.

The first, Christmas, where we bow down and thank God for giving us the inexpressible gift of Jesus Christ, His only Son. The Bible says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32)

God the Father gave His most precious Gift, His Son from eternity, as a sacrifice for our sins!

The second feast, the Passover, is where we celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, where He was made an offering for our sins!

The third, Pentecost, where God showed His compassion on us, in not leaving us alone, but sent forth His Holy Spirit to us. Once again, we can only marvel that He would send His Spirit to be with us who are vile worms.

May God open our spiritual eyes so we may, in the measure possible in this life, grasp these heavenly mysteries.

Let us firstly contemplate God the Father. This name "Father" signifies that fellowship we have with the Most Holy One, being one of His kindred. A little child will come to his father, sit on his lap and regard him as all-knowing and perfect. His father is precious to him. A child doesn't worry about what he will eat or wear, for his father cares for him. He just needs to be with his father and is taken care of. He is close to his father, and in close fellowship with his father.

"For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." (Matthew 15:4-6).

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12).

"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 2:10).

"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." (Isaiah 64:8).

He is our father since He has created us.

He is our father through His covenant with us.

He is also our father through the Lord Jesus Christ when we are saved and He makes us a new creation.

He is our Father since He adopted us. He became our father when He saved and redeemed us.

You cannot call Him "Father" simply because He created you or you grew up in a Christian home, but only if you're born again, adopted by Him. Jesus said to the Pharisees that their father was the devil and not God the Father.

Jesus is fully God and He became fully man. Christ is both Son of God and son of man. Only through Him can we be reconciled to God.

Let's also look at God the Holy Spirit. John said that Jesus will "baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt 3:11), as if it is two separate things. However, we can express it as this that He will baptise you with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a consuming fire. To the one who resists Him and does not want to get converted He is a consuming fire that destroys. But to a child of God the Holy Spirit is a purifying fire which cleanses and purifies him and removes all the dross from his life. Malachi says He will sit down and purify the sons of Levi as a purifier of silver and gold.

When the Holy Spirit comes He regenerates you that you are born again and then He is a purifying fire, burning up all the filth in your life. An unconverted person cannot call God His father, for he was never adopted into God's family. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the children of God.

How can you call God your Father when you are disobedient to Him? A child honours and obeys his father.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "you must be born again". Nicodemus could not understand what Jesus said, although he was the teacher of Israel.

We cannot understand the working of the Holy Spirit. He regenerates us and we're born again, not the birth from our parents but by the Spirit of God.

When the Holy Spirit starts working it's amazing how He separates things in your life and separates you from those who slander and love the world.

If you want to know if you've been filled with the Holy Spirit then apply Jesus' test. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Have you received that power of the Holy Spirit to be a witness of Jesus Christ? Not the power to heal or raise people from the dead, but the power to be His witnesses.

Jesus also said, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come." (Matthew 12:32)

Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near.

We even find three-in-one examples in nature, like a clover leaf or an egg, which consists of the shell, egg white and yoke. We who are created in God's image also consist of three parts - body, soul and spirit.

He who doesn't believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit cannot have saving faith. Even the devils believe in God yet they tremble.

We need to have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

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