



The Gospel Project – Sermon Outline

Title: The Spirit Defined

Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Matthew 28:19

Connection to Unit Theme: While we are hard pressed to comprehend it, the Bible is clear that God is One and has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons. The Holy Spirit is one of these three Persons of God.

Introduction Idea

Almost every object lesson I have heard concerning the Trinity has bordered on heresy. Don't get me wrong. The teachers were well-meaning and usually helped to understand one aspect of the tri-unity of our God. Yet, as these teachers affirm one part they typically undermine another. For this reason we are best to simply say what the Bible says about God's tri-unity and not try to help people wrap their minds around what is incomprehensible.

Most heretics do not begin with the intention of denying foundational biblical truth. They usually begin with great intentions and hopes. Most anti-trinitarian heretics set out to strongly affirm one aspect of the Trinity, such as the oneness of God, but end up denying another aspect. Therefore it is best that we simply say that the Bible strongly affirms that God is One and He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons.

Sermon Division I – God is one (Deut. 6:4-5)

The "Shema" (named for the first word in the Hebrew version of verse 4: "hear") was the centerpiece of Jewish faith and prayers. There is only one God. There are no rival gods. Dualism is not an option. He alone is deserving of love, worship, and devotion. Therefore, God should have no competition when it comes to our hearts' loyalty.

Affirming that God is One is foundational to understanding who God is. Thankfully the Jewish people took this truth very seriously. This is why Jewish leaders picked up stones to throw at Jesus when he said, "I AM". They knew what was at stake. If Jesus was a mere mortal He was committing blasphemy. In their eyes, He was leading people away from right worship of God. But if He was God in the flesh, as He was, they had no right to pick up those stones.

Part of God's motivation for redemption comes from the jealousy with which He protects His holy name. Under this motivation He roots out of His world all sin and unbelief, filling it with His glory. We want to be on the redemptive side of that jealousy.

Application: What does the Oneness of God mean for your life? Do you have other gods before Him? Do you entertain rival affections? The Lord is jealous. He calls idolaters, like you and me, to repent and turn to Him in faith. There is only One God. It is foolish for us to attempt to supplant Him with another god.



Sermon Division II – God is one, revealed in three distinct Persons (Matt. 28:19)

While we must strongly affirm the Oneness of God, we must also strongly affirm that God has revealed Himself in three distinct persons. There are many "Trinitarian formulas" in Scripture. These are places where the Father, Son, and Spirit are shown in the same place as being the one God yet revealed as three distinct persons. One such verse is Matthew 28:19. Here Jesus tells His disciples to baptize followers into the "name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". This clearly shows that God has revealed Himself in three distinct persons.

There were clues even in the beginning that God Himself is a community. In Genesis 1:26 God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". We then read that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." It was only through the community of "male and female" that mankind could accurately reflect the communal God.

The Scriptures portray the Father as God, the Son as God, and the Spirit as God. And yet as we see in verses such as Matthew 28:19 we must view these as three different Persons, though all fully and completely God.

Application: God lives within community. To accurately reflect God we too are to live in community with other believers. How does your relationship with other people accurately represent the heart that God has for community? The diversity within the Trinity also shows us the importance of diversity in community. Does your community reflect this diversity?

Conclusion Idea

If we are saved, it is because of the work of the triune God. As Fred Sanders helps believers see, "A Christian, and especially an evangelical Christian, is somebody who is already immersed in the reality of the Trinity, long before beginning to reflect on the idea of the Trinity ". We do not have to fully grasp the reality of the Trinity. But what the Bible does affirm about our triune God ought to lead us toward worship and awe.

Mike Leake is the husband of Nikki, father of Isaiah and Hannah, as well as the associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Jasper, Indiana. He frequently writes at SBC Voices and his personal blog, mikeleake.net. He is also slowly working toward completing his Master's of Divinity degree at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.