

Message Six

The Church in the Triune God

Scripture Reading: 1 Thes. 1:1, 3-6, 10; 1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12

- I. The Triune God is the structure of the New Testament—Matt. 12:28; 28:19; John 15:26; Acts 2:33; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:16-17; 4:4-6; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 1:4-5.**
- II. We come to know the Triune God by experiencing Him and enjoying Him—1 John 1:5; 2:27; 4:16; 5:11-12:**
 - A. The Triune God is not merely the object of our faith; He is dwelling in us as our life and life supply for our experience and enjoyment—4:13-15.
 - B. We need to know the Triune God experientially through the inner enjoyment of the subjective God—2:27; 4:4.
 - C. If we would know the Triune God, we must be in the line of life and in the process of the growth in life; the more we grow in life, the more we will be concerned with the Divine Trinity—2:13-18.
- III. When the Triune God becomes our experience and enjoyment, He is not only the One on the throne who is universally vast, but He is also the One in our heart—Rev. 4:2-3; 5:6; 1 John 3:19-21:**
 - A. We know the Triune God not in the vastness of the universe but in the personal realm of our heart—Heb. 8:10-11.
 - B. The concern of the New Testament is that we know the Triune God who has come to dwell in our being—the One who dwells in our spirit and desires to spread into all the inward parts of our heart—Eph. 3:14-17a; 1 John 3:19-21.
 - C. The New Testament way for us to know the Triune God is personal, detailed, and experiential—2:20, 27; Heb. 10:16.
 - D. How precious is this experiential way of knowing the Triune God!
- IV. The New Testament, like the Bible as a whole, is fully composed of and structured with the Divine Trinity—Matt. 28:19; Rev. 1:4-5; 22:1-2:**
 - A. The entire New Testament is related to the Triune God; the Triune God is the element for the construction of the New Testament—Eph. 3:16; 4:4-6.
 - B. The Bible presents us a picture of the move of the Divine Trinity for the accomplishment of His economy—Luke 15:3-32; Eph. 2:18.
 - C. The Bible was written according to the governing principle of the Triune God wrought into His chosen and redeemed people as their enjoyment, their drink, and their fountain of life and light—Psa. 36:8-9.
 - D. The revelation concerning the Triune God in the Word of God is for the dispensing of God in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people for their experience and enjoyment so that they might become His corporate expression for eternity—Eph. 1:3-23; 4:16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.
- V. The Epistle of 1 Thessalonians is addressed to “the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”—1:1:**
 - A. On the one hand, the church in Thessalonica was of the Thessalonians; on the other hand, this church was in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Such a church is born of God the Father with His life and nature and is organically united with the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He is and has done—John 1:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17.
2. We need to see that the church is composed of human beings who are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have the life of God and who are in the organic union with Christ—John 3:15; 15:1, 5.

B. When Paul speaks of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually means that the church is in the Triune God—1 Thes. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:4-6:

1. The expressions *God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* both imply the Spirit; therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood, and we may speak of the church being in the Triune God.
2. Because the three of the Divine Trinity are inseparable, whenever we have the first, the Father, we also have the second, the Son, and the third, the Spirit—Matt. 12:28; Rom. 8:11; Gal. 4:4-6.
3. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, not three; They are distinct but not separate—2 Cor. 13:14:
 - a. We cannot separate the Son from the Father, or the Father and the Son from the Spirit, because all three coexist and coinhere—John 14:10-11.
 - b. In Their eternal coexistence the three of the Godhead are distinct, but Their eternal coinherence makes Them one.
4. In the divine economy the three of the Divine Trinity work and are manifested respectively in three consecutive stages—Eph. 1:3-14:
 - a. The Father is the One who plans, originates, and initiates—vv. 3-6.
 - b. The Son accomplishes everything that the Father has planned, originated, and initiated—vv. 7-12.
 - c. The Spirit executes and applies what the Father has planned and what the Son has accomplished—vv. 13-14.
 - d. Selection is of the Father, deliverance is of the Son, and imparting, or propagating, is of the Spirit—1 Thes. 1:3-6, 10.
5. When the Son comes, He comes with the Father and by the Spirit; the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the Son with the Father—John 14:26; 15:26.

C. For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is in the processed Triune God—Matt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6:

1. According to the Bible, there is no such thing as the church being merely in God; rather, the church is in the processed Triune God—2 Cor. 13:14.
2. In Genesis 1 God was the unprocessed God, but in the New Testament He has become the processed Triune God—John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:19.
3. *Processed* refers to the crucial steps through which the Triune God has passed in the divine economy: incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection:
 - a. In crucifixion the Lord accomplished redemption, the termination of the old creation, and the destruction of Satan and death—Eph. 1:7; Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14.
 - b. In resurrection He germinated the new creation—2 Cor. 5:17.
 - c. Now He is the life-giving Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17a.
4. The church in the processed Triune God is the church in the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son—John 14:20:
 - a. The processed Triune God reaches us, contacts us, and is applied to us in our experience as the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - b. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is now the life-giving Spirit dwelling in

us—John 14:10-11, 16-17, 20.

c. When we are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Spirit; thus, we are the church in the processed Triune God.

D. If we see the vision of the church in the Triune God, this vision will control our thinking, our activities, and our entire life—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19.