Trinity Seminar Week 6

Lesson #10 The Dangers of Not Knowing God as Trinity

"All non-Trinitarian formulations of the Christian message are by biblical standards inadequate and fundamentally false."
J.I. Packer

Many Christians view the doctrine of the *Trinity* as a difficult theological concept rather than something essential to everyday faith. The word itself can feel abstract or overly academic. Yet the danger of not knowing that the Christian God is *Trinity* is far greater than simply lacking theological precision. When believers lose sight of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the living center of Christianity, the Christian life can slowly become impersonal, moralistic, fearful, or spiritually empty. The *Trinity* is not an optional appendix to the gospel; it is the core of the gospel itself. So here are a few of the problems with not knowing the *Trinity*.

Firstly, if God is not understood as *Trinity*, love itself becomes harder to understand at the deepest level. Scripture teaches that "God is love," but the *Trinity* reveals how this has eternally been true. Before creation ever existed, the Father loved the Son in the fellowship of the Spirit. Love was not something God started doing once humans appeared; it belongs to God's very triune being. Without the *Trinity*, God can easily be imagined as solitary power, distant authority, or pure will. But in the Christian vision, ultimate reality is eternal communion, delight, and self-giving love. This changes everything about how Christians understand worship, relationships, humility, forgiveness, and community. Understanding *Trinity* lifts love up out of being just another attribute of God or worldly sentiment. Understanding that our one God is three persons who exist in passionate loving relationship makes love the core of all reality.

Secondly, a loss of Trinitarian understanding distorts the Christian life itself. Many believers unintentionally relate to God only vaguely, as if God were merely a generic mono-divine force. The intimate realities of the Father's adopting love, the Son's saving union with humanity, and the Spirit's indwelling presence can become blurred together into an impersonal spirituality. As a result, prayer may become mechanical, obedience may become driven by fear, and Christianity may be reduced to behavior management rather than participation in the life of God. The New Testament repeatedly presents salvation not merely as escaping punishment, but as being brought into fellowship with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, the *Trinity* protects the gospel from becoming centered on the self. Without the relational life of the Triune God at the center, faith can drift toward individualism, performance, or spiritual perfectionism. But the *Trinity* reminds believers that reality itself is rooted in grace-filled relationships and shared sacrificial life. The church is called to reflect the community and love of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Christians are not merely individual followers of moral teachings; they are invited into communion with the living God and one another as the true culture of reality.

Ultimately, the danger of neglecting the *Trinity* is that Christianity can slowly lose its theological beauty. The gospel becomes smaller, thinner, and less personal. But when believers see that God is eternally and robustly Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Christian faith becomes not merely a system of truths, but an invitation into the experience of divine love itself. The *Trinity* reveals that at the center of the universe is not loneliness, but eternal communion. The core of reality is a fiery relational loving God, not just the empty space of individual ethics. In fact, it is this author's opinion that the dramatic heavenly scenes in passages such as Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, and Revelation 4, with all of the manifestations such as thunder, lightning, wheels within wheels, etc., are being produced from the central love relationship within the Trinity. Just as thunder is the result of unseen air clapping back together after being separated by lightning, so the unseen love of God is manifesting with great glory and fanfare. The Trinitarian view fires the imagination and inspires awe-saturated worship.

With these dangers being listed at the end of this study, we want to strongly encourage you to make a life study out of the *Trinity*. Meditate on scriptures about the *Trinity*. Read theological works about the *Trinity*. Worship with songs about the *Trinity*. Fellowship with other believers discussing the *Trinity*. Because the reality is that the knowledge of God is the most important knowledge on earth. And the knowledge of God starts with a trinitarian understanding of a dynamic relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which you have been included in through the gospel of grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

Recommended Reading on the Trinity

Delighting in the Trinity, Michael Reeves

Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace, James Torrance

The Good God, Michael Reeves

The Knowledge of the Holy, A.W. Tozer

Knowing God, J.I. Packer

The Mediation of Christ, T.F. Torrance

The Christian Doctrine of God, Thomas F. Torrance

A Basic Theology for Christ-Followers, Vic Gordon