

“WHO IS GOD?”  
Psalm 8:1-9, Acts 8:14-17, John 6:41-51  
Trinity Sunday, June 3 & 4, 2023

“Robert Fulghum once sat beside an Australian carpenter on an airplane, and they struck up a conversation about theology. The carpenter declared that his theology had a lot to do with fleas and a dog. How so? Arguing whether or not God exists, he said, is like fleas arguing whether or not the dog exists.

Fulghum goes on, saying, “That reminds me of an old story that, I believe, first appeared in a British newspaper, about a family of mice who lived inside a large piano. All the dark spaces of their world were filled with sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by it. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was Someone who made the music - though invisible to them - above, yet so close to them. They loved to think of the Great Player whom they could not see.

“Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned very thoughtful. He had discovered how the music was made. Wires were the secret; tightly stretched wires of graduated lengths which trembled and vibrated. They must revise all their old beliefs: None but the most conservative could any longer believe in the Unseen Player.

“Later another explorer carried the explanation further. Hammers were now the secret, numbers of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires. This was a more complicated theory, but it all went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical and mathematical world. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth.

“But the pianist continued to play.”<sup>1</sup>

It sounds a lot like the world of humanity, where we have allowed science and mathematics to influence the way we see and understand God, rather than keeping to the teachings of the Bible. Many have had “revelations” about who God is or how this world is to operate, and instead of questioning those “revelations,” they are conclusively received and accepted and followed diligently as truth, leading

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<sup>1</sup> (Robert J. Morgan, *Stories, Illustrations & Quotes*, [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000] pg. 352)

many to distraction and disappointment. Other theories of who God is are all based upon human conjecture and one person after another puts up the thought of who God is and how we are to understand Him and even receive Him. And it's gotten to the point where only the most conservative persons still believes in our Unseen God who created all things and in whom we have life and breath and gives us purpose.

Psalm 8 gives us the grand view of God as the Creator of the universe. All that is was made by God for His glory and for our enjoyment. The majesty of the world was not meant for us to comprehend as much as it is for us to enjoy and to give God thanks and praise for providing it to us for as long as we are here. For us to try to fully comprehend God is such a foolish venture, because finite individuals cannot grasp the fullness of an infinite God.

So David rightly states, *“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them?”* (Ps. 8:3-4). This question resonates in our hearts and we continue to make meaning for ourselves of who God is so that we might come to know Him and revere Him.

Over the millennia, humans have tried to not only discover God, but to categorize Him in a way that makes sense to them. And “one of the greatest doctrines that is unbeknownst to many but is a hot doctrine today is Trinitarianism. [That’s a big word that means we believe that God is found in three distinct “persons:” Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three manifestations of the same God.]

“Muslims say that they believe in one God. Christians say that they believe in one God. Although both groups are saying the same thing, they really are not saying the same thing at all. The Christian God is not the same god as the Muslim god because the Christian God is a triune God. He is God as Father, God as Son, and God as Spirit. The Muslim god is not a triune god so it is a flawed view of God. It is not Trinitarian.” Throughout the Scriptures of Old Testament and New Testament, God shows Himself in three distinct ways, so to only see God as one, is missing a huge part of who God really is. It works like this:

“If you believe that Texas has a capital and I believe that Texas has a capital, it sounds like we believe the same thing. However, if you think the capital is Fort Worth, and I think the capital is Austin, we do not believe in the same thing. Believing in one capital doesn’t mean we believe in the same thing.”<sup>2</sup> So, too, believing in God without seeing Him fully is incomplete, and we’re not talking about the same God. Though we cannot fully comprehend God, we can begin to understand Him by the three ways that He presents Himself to us and therefore we begin to understand His desire for us.

We first see God as Father, the One who gives life to us and protects us. God’s power is indescribable, and it is beyond our imagination the wisdom and strength it took to create the universe just right so that there could be life here on this planet. As our Creator, we see the awesome nature of God through the majestic and the microscopic.

Scientists have confirmed that if the line-up of the planets in our solar system varied by even one degree, Earth would no longer be sustainable for any life. Change one degree and everything falls apart. Gravity would no longer work to keep us standing on the surface, the moon would no longer stay in orbit, resulting in chaos all over the world. If the Earth were just a few thousand miles further away from the Sun, not only would it change the orbit of the earth, it would change the climate of the earth, and it would influence the ability of the earth to grow plants, have liquid water, and many other things that we take for granted. So for the solar system to have just happened, with all the intricacies of what is needed for life, it is difficult to believe that it could have happened by chance to enable all of life to have come into being.

But God is the One who made the world, put the universe into place at just the right degrees of being so that everything could exist. And out of delight for His creation, humans have the opportunity to praise God for His great handiwork.

And as we look at who God is, we begin to see a great love that He has for this world. We have a record of His working with people throughout history, and we see His great influence in their lives as

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<sup>2</sup> (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publications, 2009], pg. 330-331, #996)

they decided to follow Him. When they trusted in Him, He granted them peace from any enemies, and abundance to all they had. He even delivered them from the attack of armies that far outnumbered them. But when they disobeyed Him, God gave them up to occupation and oppression. Yes, we have some very strict guidelines to follow in order that we all might have life and health and abundance. God established the laws for us to follow so that everyone would have the safety and freedom to live a life that bring happiness and peace.

But humans have a problem - we decide not to follow God's guidelines and laws and we find ourselves treating one another in ways that are less able to support life for all people. We disobey the laws given to us and we only look out for ourselves, and we find pain, and hurt, and disappointment, and separation, and division, and hardship, and toil, and abuse, and corruption, and despair, and ultimately, destruction.

Yet because of God's love for us, He provided a way that we could find hope and life. Because of our sin separating us from one another and from God, He provided a way for us to find forgiveness of that sin. He gave us a unique expression of Himself here with us in the form of a man, who instructed us in how we can restore our relationship with each other and with God. God sent His own Son, Jesus of Nazareth, so that He could become the pathway back to fellowship with God the Father. He lived a sinless life, illuminated the Scriptures so that we can know God more, and then gave His life as the perfect sacrifice needed for us to find forgiveness for our sin. He paid the price for all our sin so that when we put our faith in Him as our Savior, we find His forgiveness which brings life to us, not only in this world, but for all time. Listen to the way that Jesus explains it to the people. This is John 6:41-51. (READ John 6:41-51).

Jesus took our sin upon Himself and gave His body to become the sacrifice for us to find freedom from our sin and give us a renewed connection with God, the Father. Only as we claim Him as our Savior, the one who has taken our sins upon Himself, and put our trust in His work of Salvation for us, can we find complete forgiveness for our sins, and be given a new life through Him. As we take

Him into us and follow His teachings, just like eating bread and finding life in it, we are given life as we let Jesus become our Savior, and let Him live in each one of us. And it's not just for us to have for ourselves, but that we might tell others about Him and help them find forgiveness, too. Like sharing bread with others so that they might live physically, so as we share Jesus with them, they live spiritually, nourished and encouraged by Him.

So many people in our world work hard to gain as much material possession and wealth as possible. Yet, they still struggle every day to find happiness and peace and meaning for their lives. On our own we cannot find release from our sin, and so we become wrapped up in all the things of this world to try to find new life. But the things of this world will not give us peace, security, hope or love.

So instead of trying to work our way back into a relationship with God, or trying to find peace and hope in the stuff of this world, God manifested Himself to us through Jesus, His only Begotten Son, so that as we put our trust and faith in Him, we find release from the burdens of this life, and we find the joy, peace and love that we so eagerly desire, but can find in nothing else. Jesus satisfies the hungry heart striving for the newness that only He can give to us.

But this comes as we give up our striving to do it all on our own and simply trust in God's way. He invites us to follow His laws, live according to His guidelines, and follow Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Then, as we love God and trust in Jesus as the One who makes real life possible, God is delighted to protect us, provide for us, and use us to help others to come to know Him, too.

In order to help us to keep our faith in Him as the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, God manifests Himself to us in a third way to give us the courage and strength we need to remain faithful to Him. God's Holy Spirit is given to those who trust and follow Jesus, not to become better than anyone else, but to inspire them to live as witnesses to the love of God in this world so that others might see Him through their lives.

You see, God's Holy Spirit works to glorify Jesus, the Son. He does not seek glory in himself,

or lift Himself up as a separate God, but works toward highlighting the work of Jesus for the world to see. Though He is God in full essence and character, the Holy Spirit of God moves to encourage our own faithfulness and build up our devotion to Jesus. And He does that in different ways for each person, enabling some to do one part of God the Father with one particular gift, while empowering others to do other parts of the work of God with other gifts. He gifts each follower of Jesus with what is needed to complete the work of the church in our world today. The Holy Spirit stimulates each believer in Jesus to continue to work for Jesus in our world today, by endowing particular abilities to them for the benefit of those who follow the Lord Jesus.

Think of it this way. “A pretzel has three holes. The first hole is not the second hole, the second hole is not the third hole, but the same dough ties all three holes together. There’s one God made up of three distinct beings, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but they’re all tied together by the same essence or the same divine nature. The same attributes, perfections, and descriptions of one belong to the others.”<sup>3</sup> Separate, but the same God, each with a distinct character, but of the one and the same God.

The Holy Spirit, then, is God moving about the face of the earth touching the lives of those who believe in Jesus and diligently seek to follow Him. We saw that in our reading of Acts 8:14-17, where the disciples helped the people come to know Jesus, and then the Holy Spirit moved into them to enable them to do the work of ministry to those around them.

God’s Holy Spirit moves in strange and marvelous ways so that all who believe in Jesus are given just what they need to do their part of inviting others to find Jesus as their Savior, too. To some, it will be a gift that is very visible to others, like teaching, preaching, or administration. To some the Holy Spirit will enable them to bring about healing, or encouragement, or evangelism, or even helping others experience the love of Jesus. But to each person, God works in them to provide them all they need to fulfill their part of God’s work.

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<sup>3</sup> (Tony Evan, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, pg. 331)

Take Oswald Chambers for example. “As a young man, Oswald Chambers, of *My Utmost For His Highest* fame, battled a persistent sense of barrenness in his Christian life. He finally wrote: *I was getting desperate. I knew no one who had what I wanted; in fact I did not know what I did want. But I knew that if what I had was all the Christianity there was, the thing was a fraud.*

*“Then Luke 11:13 got hold of me. [It says, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"]*

*“At a little meeting in Dunoon, a well-known lady was asked to take the after meeting. She did not speak, but set us to prayer, and then sang, ‘Touch me again, Lord.’ I felt nothing, but I knew emphatically my time had come. I rose to my feet. Then and there I claimed the gift of the Holy Spirit in dogged committal on Luke 11:13.*

*“I had no vision of heaven or of angels; I had nothing. I was as dry and empty as ever, no power or realization of God, no witness of the Holy Spirit. Then I was asked to speak at a meeting and forty souls came out to the front! I came to realize that God intended me, having asked, to simply take it by faith, and that power would be there. I might see it only by the backward loo, but I was to reckon on the fact that God would be with me.*

“From that point on, Oswald Chambers ministered with unusual power. His words and writings touched people around the world, especially when he taught, as he frequently did, from his favorite verse, Luke 11:13. And when Oswald died at an early age in Egypt during World War I, an old Australian soldier whom he had led to Christ had a Bible carved in stone for his grave. Its pages were turned to Luke 11:13.”<sup>4</sup>

God is the One who formed us, the One who has rescued us, and the One who authorizes us to do His continued work of bringing Salvation to everyone on the earth. He loves us so much that He desires that no one be lost because of their sins, but that all might have life and have it abundantly. Jesus said,

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<sup>4</sup> (Robert J. Morgan, *Stories, Illustrations & Quotes*, [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2000] pg. 440-441)

*“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost”* (Luke 19:10). And He challenges each one of us to take His yoke upon us and continue His work to being life to all those who are headed towards eternal death.

So we are all called to once more, put our faith and trust in the Lord our God, to claim His Salvation given to us as we believe in Him, and then diligently strive to abide by all His commands and shine out the love of Jesus, so that everyone around us might see our good works, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and give glory to God (Matthew 5:16).

God loves every person, more than we could ever imagine. But He will not force His way into them, nor strong-arm them into believing in Him. It is His delight to use each one of us - empty, dry, powerless, timid, weak, or small as we are - to bring glory to Him each day as we praise Him for all that He has done, and to help another to find their way back to Him as we live our life as a witness to Him. As we simply trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior, and give ourselves over to the work of the Holy Spirit, He will gift us with just the right ability at just the right time to help another person find their faith in the Lord, too.

As you come forward today to receive the Lord’s Supper, I invite you to quiet yourself and in humble submission and in trust in Jesus, ask that the Holy Spirit come into you and begin His work in you. It may feel like nothing is happening, but just your asking of God to come into you and begin His work through you, He will enable you to do great things for Him, and for His glory. Let’s pray.

*“God [You are] our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble* (Psalm 46:1).  
*“...Lord [You are] my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; [You are] my God ... my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold”* (Psalm 18:2). Jesus, You are the Savior, *“for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in [through You], our Lord”* (Romans 3:23). And Holy Spirit, You are the One *“whom the Father will send in [Jesus’] name, [and] ... teach [us] all things and ... remind [us] of everything [Jesus] said ...”* (John 14:26), so that we may be at work for Him to bring about the Salvation of the world. Praise to You, oh God, in Jesus’ Name. AMEN.