



Sooke Baptist Church
Sunday, March 3, 2024, 10am

Our Triune God
Life in Themselves

In the OT Scriptures... God revealed himself to be:
...Psalm 42:2: ...**the living God**... Daniel 6:26-27: **who endures forever, whose kingdom will not be destroyed, whose dominion will never end... who rescue and who saves and who performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.**

This truth of who God is....has informed and shaped the life and the worship of God's people in every generation.

In the OT days of Nehemiah, after confessing their sins, after listening to the reading of the Book of the Law, the Levites led the Hebrew people in praise and prayer, saying to the LORD...

Nehemiah 9:5b-6

**Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise.
You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them.**

You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

The living God gives life to everything... and those who have received life from God... worship the LORD.

Life does not spontaneously spring from nothing; it comes out of the living God.

The all-encompassing confession of the Hebrew people regarding their God who gives life to all things... was this...

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, **the LORD is one.**

The Hebrew people did not worship multiple gods. They worshiped one God, the LORD, who is... the Creator of all things, who gives life to everything.

What particularly confounded the religious leaders in Jesus' day... was that he claimed attributes only God has.... and did things that only God does.

Nehemiah 9:6

You give life to everything...

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, **the LORD is one.**

John 1:1-4

Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

If God is one, how can there be... another person who is also God? Here we encounter wondrous mystery.



It is my intent on the first Sunday of each month... when we celebrate the Lord's Table to look into the Scripture regarding the triune nature of God.

I do so to help us be astonished and in awe of our God.

I also do so to help us have confidence in the Scriptures that clearly speak....in both the OT and the NT that our God is triune.

The early church affirmed that God is one.... and that the Father and the Son along with the Spirit are eternally divine persons.... Three who are One.

The Creeds of the early church endeavored to articulate this wondrous mystery... so that the people of God would live in response to who the LORD is.

The first was the apostle's creed... a confession that captured the core beliefs of what Jesus had taught.

This is what the Creed said... regarding Jesus.

The Apostles Creed

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Then in 325 AD because of pervasive error, the church gathered at Nicea to carefully articulate the truth regarding Jesus Christ. This confession came to be known as the Nicene Creed. Look at what they said about who Jesus is.

The Nicene Creed

325 AD

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

The word "**begotten**" translates the Greek word **monogenes**. False teachers had latched onto this word to try to prove their false teaching that Jesus Christ isn't God; i.e., that Jesus isn't equal in essence to God as the Second Person of the Trinity.

They saw the word "begotten" in John 3:16 and said that Jesus is a created being because only someone who had a beginning in time can be "begotten."

But what does *monogenes* mean?

According to the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG, 3rd Edition), **monogenes** has two primary definitions.

The first definition is "pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship."

This is its meaning in [Hebrews 11:17](#) when the writer refers to Isaac as **Abraham's "one and only son."**

Abraham had more than one son, but Isaac was the only son he had by Sarah and the only son of the covenant.

Therefore, it is **the uniqueness of Isaac** among the other sons that allows for the use of *monogenes* in that context.

The second definition is "pertaining to being the only one of its kind or class, unique in kind."

This is the meaning that is implied in [John 3:16](#) (and also in [John 1:14, 18](#); [3:18](#); [1 John 4:9](#)).

[John 3:16](#)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son....

[John 1:14](#)

... we have seen the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father...

[John 1:18](#)

... the one and only Son... has made him known...

[1 John 4:9](#)

God sent his one and only Son into the world...

The apostle John was primarily concerned with demonstrating that Jesus is the Son of God ([John 20:31](#)), and he used *monogenes* to highlight Jesus as uniquely God's Son—sharing the same divine nature as God—as opposed to believers who are God's sons and daughters by adoption ([Ephesians 1:5](#)).

In this regard, Jesus is God's "begotten," his "one and only" Son.
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The Nicene Creed **325 AD**

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

The Nicene Creed **325 AD**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

But one hundred and twenty five years later, in 451 AD the church was again required to meet and further qualify from the scriptures who Jesus is.

The result of their deliberation was the Chalcedonian creed.

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

We, then, following the holy fathers,
all with one consent teach men to confess
one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
the same perfect in Godhead
and also perfect in manhood;
truly God and truly man,
of a rational soul and body;

What did they mean by... “of a rational soul and body?”

This phrase means that Jesus has a true human body and a true human soul, just like you and me.

One of the false teachings of that era was that Jesus wasn't really human; that he only appeared to be human; that his humanity was an illusion.

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

coessential with the Father
according to the Godhead,
and consubstantial with us
according to the manhood;
in all things like unto us, without sin;
begotten before all ages of the Father
according to the Godhead,

What does coessential mean?

Jesus has the same nature as God the Father.

What does consubstantial mean?

Jesus had the same nature as you and me.

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

and in these latter days,
for us and for our salvation,
born of the Virgin Mary,
the mother of God,
according to the manhood;
one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten,
to be acknowledged in two natures,

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

without confusion,
without change,
without division,
without separation;
the distinction of natures being by no means
taken away by the union,
but rather the property of each nature
being preserved,

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

and concurring in one person
and one subsistence,
not parted or divided into two persons,
but one and the same Son,
and only begotten,
God the Word,
the Lord Jesus Christ;

What does subsistence mean?

The Word made flesh (John 1)—is one person.
One subsistence... means Jesus had two natures united in one
person, without any blending of the two natures.

The Chalcedonian Creed 451AD

as the prophets from the beginning
have declared concerning Him,
and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us,
and the creed of the holy fathers
has handed down to us.

The Chalcedonian Creed affirmed that the Son, who is fully equal to the Father, had genuinely become fully human without ceasing to be divine, in order to accomplish our salvation.

If your mind is reeling... then you have been gripped by the wondrous mystery, not only of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, but of the triune nature of God... He who is One who is Three.

Gregory of Nazianzus, lived in the 300's.

As he meditated upon and pondered the triune God, he wrote:

“One day we will know God more fully but for the present time what reaches us... is...a small beam from a great light.”

1 Corinthians 13:12

Now we see but a poor reflection
as in a mirror.

Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully,
even as I am fully known.

In this present time, we can only speak about who God is... as far as... God's revelation in Scripture will allow, which means we cannot speak... beyond... what he has revealed.

What this means is that we are not at liberty to fill in what we think are missing pieces about who God is...or how we'd like God to be... or how we'd have liked him to have acted....

In his wisdom the LORD has made known what he determines is sufficient for us to live in relationship with him in this present time.

Deuteronomy 29:28

**The secret things belong to the LORD our God,
but the things that are revealed belong to us
and to our children forever,
that we may follow all the words of this law.**

There is an incident in John 5 that I want us to briefly consider because it is one of many passages that speak of Jesus' uniqueness, of he who is... truly God and truly man.

It started with Jesus healing a man... a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

Jesus healed that man on the Sabbath – and then told him ...

“Pick up your mat and walk” ...which the healed man did.

But on his way home, the man ran into the religious leaders who challenged him for carrying his bed... which in their estimation was work, and therefore an infraction of the Sabbath.

The man told the religious leaders ... he was only doing what his healer had told him to do.

When they asked the name of his healer, he told the religious leaders, “I don’t know his name.”

Jesus later met the man at the temple and warned him to stop sinning.

Armed with the knowledge that it was Jesus who had healed him, the man went and told this to the religious leaders.

Here’s where we pick up the story in John 5.

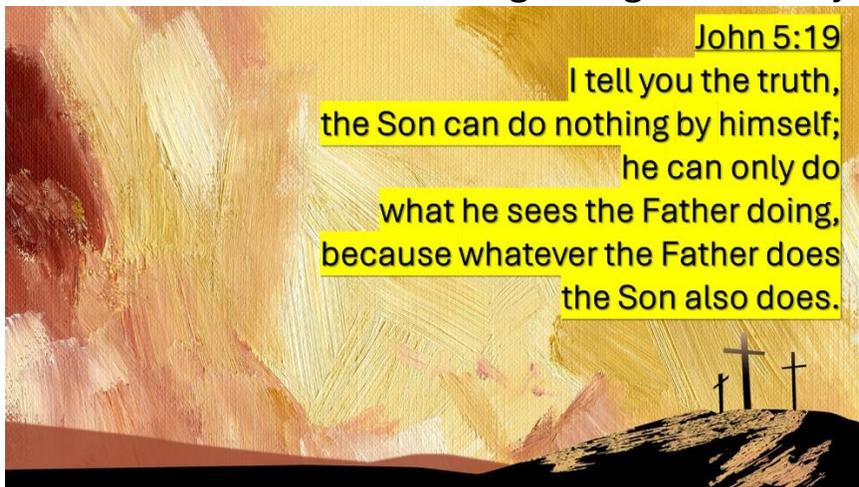
Read 5:16.

Jesus was persecuted... not because he healed a man... but because he had healed him on the Sabbath.

Read 5:17-18.

The religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus... because in their estimation he was blaspheming – calling God his Father ... was tantamount to claiming equality with God.

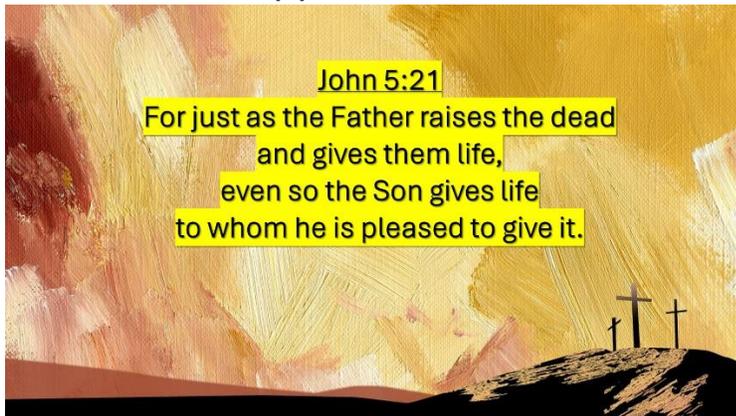
Jesus explanation to the religious leaders only confirmed what the miracle had made known regarding his identity.



Jesus’ words impressed upon his listeners as well as us... that there is a unity to the person of God.

The Father and the Son do not work at cross purposes.
They do not have their own projects.
What the Father does the Son does because they are both God.

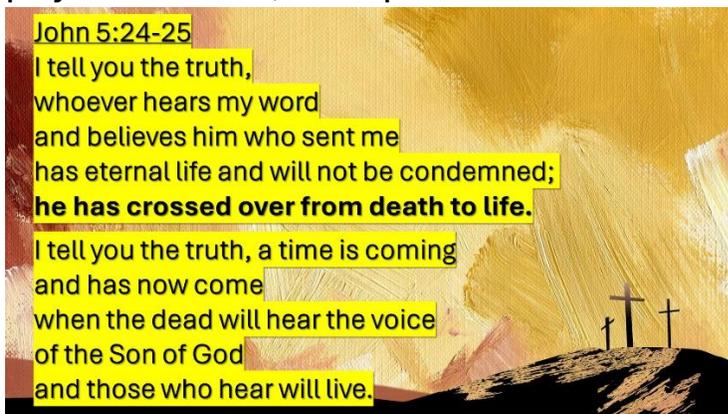
In this regard, the religious leaders had gotten it right.
Jesus was claiming to be God.
His miracle of healing was something only God could do.
Then Jesus dropped this truth bomb on them.



Raising the dead was something only God can do, and Jesus claimed he had that power and authority.

Jesus didn't make it easy for the religious leaders; but that's how it is when truth first confronts a hard heart.

As Jesus continued it became clear that he was speaking, not of physical death, but spiritual death.



Everyone to whom Jesus spoke was spiritually dead.

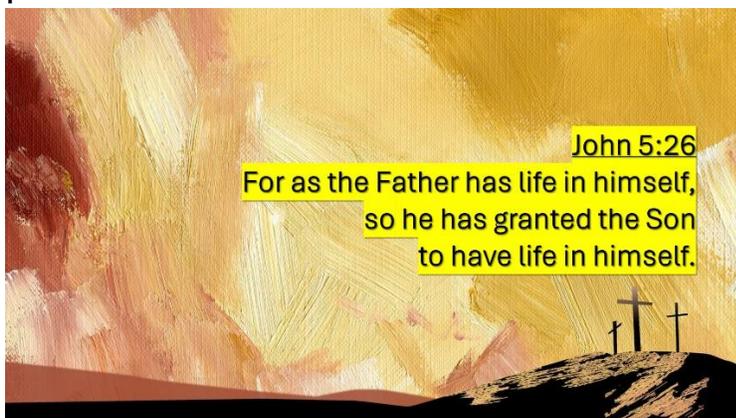
That is the human condition.

But Jesus in his teaching and in his miracles demonstrated that like the Father he was able to bring to life a dead heart, with the same power by which he healed a diseased and broken body.

Jesus said that those who hear... and believe in the Father who sent him... these are the one who... cross over... from spiritual death to eternal life.

I think Jesus anticipated the thought processes that were occurring in his listener's minds.

They were thinking... but what is the source of your authority and power?



Like the Father Jesus is the living God.

He has life in himself.

He has the authority and power of God because he is God.

He is the One, as John 1:3 says, through whom all things were made. Jesus is the source of all life that lives on the earth and... he is the source of eternal life.

Richard Bauckham summarizes what the gospel of John in chapter five has revealed: **“What God does, Jesus Christ does.”**

With the Father he is the Creator, and he is the Life-Giver.

The religious leaders responded to this knowledge... by trying all the harder to kill Jesus.

That is one response – to reject Christ.

When he found the man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years, Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be healed?”

This is the question which the triune God asks when he finds those who are dead in their sin and who carry great burdens of guilt – “Do you want to be healed? Do you want to be forgiven?”

Those who hear his voice and believe him who sent Jesus, cross over from death to life.

And their response?

They worship the One who rescues.

John Piper writes that worship
... values God,
... treasures God,
... prizes God,
... enjoys God,
... is satisfied with God above all earthly things,
... and overflows in praise to God.

Worship is fueled by awe of the person of God... that he would forgive me of my sin.

It is in perceiving the worth of God as he has revealed himself in scripture... it is this that compels his people to give, that is, Romans 12:1: “... to present to him our bodies as living sacrifices... as a spiritual act of worship....”

As we come to the Table this morning, in the receiving and in the eating of the bread and the juice, we remember our precious Jesus.

We are astounded that he rescued us; that he died for us when we were his enemies; and that his grace alone is the means by which we have crossed over from death to life.

This is our triune God and we praise him and offer to him our bodies as living sacrifice as a response of gratitude for the giving of his body in sacrifice for us.