

# PRAYER

A Biblical Theology and Exposition of Prayer



WHAT IS PRAYER?



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Father's wrath



“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

— *John 3:36*



“. . . and were by nature children of wrath, even  
as the rest.”

— *Ephesians 2:3*



“*remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

—*Ephesians 2:12*



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Father:
  - Took the first steps to accomplish reconciliation
  - Loved us and sent his Son.



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Son:
  - Came to act as our representative
  - By his death we are forgiven
  - By his perfect life we are made righteous
- The atonement removes guilt and grants life.



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Holy Spirit:
  - Causes us to respond to the gospel through the grace of regeneration.



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Father:
- The Son:
- The Holy Spirit:



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Father: The Plan of Redemption
- The Son: The Accomplishment of Redemption
- The Holy Spirit: The Application of Redemption



# The Trinity in Prayer

- Prayer is communion with God founded upon union with God.
- Union with God is an accomplished, objective, fixed, unchangeable reality of our salvation (one way).
- Communion with God is subjective, changing, experiential result of our salvation (two-way).



# The Trinity in Prayer

- The Holy Spirit



“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

— *Romans 8:9*



“Do you not know that you are a temple of God  
and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple  
of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have  
from God, and that you are not your own?”

— *1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19*



“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation — having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.”

—*Ephesians 1:13–14*



“For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

—1 Corinthians 12:12–13



“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

—*John 14:16–18*



“In that day you will know that I am in My  
Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

—*John 14:20*



“Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

—*John 14:23*



“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

—*John 15:1–5*



“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples.”

—*John 15:6–8*



“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

—*Jude 20–21*



“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God.*”

—*Romans 8:26–27*



“for through Him we both have our access in one  
Spirit to the Father.”

—*Ephesians 2:18*



# The Trinity in Prayer

- We pray. . .
  - By the Spirit,
  - Through the Son
  - To the Father.



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Unbelievers' Prayers are not Prayer

- Only those united to Christ by the work of the Spirit can truly pray.
- Unbelievers pray, but their prayer is not true communion with God.
- We see this in both the Old and New Testament



“Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth,  
and the life; no one comes to the Father but  
through Me.”

— *John 14:6*



“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not so short that it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.”

—*Isaiah 59:1–2*



“Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*,”

—*Isaiah 29:13*



“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.”

—*Proverbs 15:8*



“He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination.”

—*Proverbs 28:9*



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Unbelievers' Prayers are not Prayer

- The only prayer God promises to hear from an unbeliever is the prayer of Romans 10:9–13.



“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “**WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for “**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**”

—*Romans 10:9–13*



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Unbelievers' Prayers are not Prayer

- The only prayer God promises to hear from an unbeliever is the prayer of Romans 10:9–13.
- God makes no promises to answer an unbelievers' prayer, although in grace he might do something an unbeliever asks.
- There is no communion with God apart from salvation.



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Believers' Prayers are Fellowship with God

- True prayer is fellowship with God.
- By the Spirit, through the Son, we communicate with the Father.
- But we don't communicate with God arbitrarily.



“We mustn’t think of prayer as a task we need to perform. It’s a way of relating to a person and enjoying our relationship with them. God is a loving Father who delights to hear us, and prayer is our opportunity to spend time with him.”

—*Tim Chester, Enjoying God, 72.*



“Communion is the mutual communication of such good things as wherein the persons holding that communion are delighted, bottomed upon some union between them. . . In spiritual things . . . those who enjoy this communion have the most excellent union for the foundation of it; and the issues of that union, which they mutually communicate, are the most precious and eminent. . . . Our communion, then, with God consisteth in his *communication of himself unto us, with our return unto him* of that which he requireth and accepteth, flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with him.”

—John Owen, *Works*, 2:8–9.



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Believers' Prayers are Fellowship with God

- The glory of God is the goodness and greatness of God, expressed in his attributes, manifested to his creatures and responded to by them such that God is seen to be weighty, honoured, majestic, and worthy of praise.



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“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

—*Philippians 3:7–11*



# The Trinity in Prayer

## Definition

- Prayer is an act of spiritual communion in which the believer responds to the Triune God in ways that he accepts as revealed in his word.



