

### WARM-UP

- What's one thing that you have experienced that you haven't been able to explain or communicate to others? Why do you think this is so?
- Describe the person on your right using one word or image. Explain why you thought of that.
- Tell us about one or two people you know very well. What made you so close to them?

**WORD** *<sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* **MATTHEW 3:16-17**

(Read also **1 JOHN 4:7-19**.)

The Trinity is one of the most challenging theological concepts for a believer. There are three Persons in full unity and relationship, and yet there is one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in perfect love together, and out of this came the created world and the redemption of mankind. We are given pictures of the Trinity through the Bible. We see this perfect relationship in the baptism of Jesus, where the Father was well pleased with the Son, the Son was acting in obedience to the Father, and the Spirit was at work all throughout. Even though we cannot fully appreciate or comprehend the Trinity, we can learn that God is love, and as people created in God's image, we are called to reflect this love. Today, we will look at two truths in understanding how God and His people are designed for relationships.

# 1 | God is love.

*So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 JOHN 4:16*

*<sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." MATTHEW 3:16-17*

The very nature of God is love. That is the simplest but also the most profound explanation of God. Perfect love originated from and existed between the three Persons of the Trinity. The Bible gives glimpses of how the Trinity exists, from creation until the return of Christ one day. In Matthew 3:16-17, we see how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are full of love and at work in the redemption of mankind. Why do you think we easily overlook this seemingly simple explanation? How do God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit show us Their love today?

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## 2 | God's people are called to reflect His love.

*<sup>16</sup>So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. <sup>17</sup>By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. . . . <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us.*

### **1 JOHN 4:16-17, 19**

Because God is love, His people are called to reflect this love. Because we are designed for relationships, we make evident the expression of love in the Trinity. Our relationships are to model the perfect love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are able to love others because of the overwhelming, unconditional, and unending love of God. As we know and trust in God's love for us (1 John 4:16), we reflect God's love to fellow believers in the church and to the rest of the world so that they too may experience the fullness of God's love. What did Jesus command the disciples to do in John 13:34-35, and why do you think this was so important to Him?

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## APPLICATION

- Why do you think it was important for God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to be present and evident in the baptism of God the Son? How do you think the Trinity is at work in your life today?
- How should the perfect love of God be evident in the church and our world today? What do you think your part is in this?
- God is love. How can you grow in your understanding of this? How can you reflect God's love to others this week?

## PRAYER

- Thank God for how the Bible reveals the truth of the Trinity. Pray that you would grow in your understanding of and faith in God every day.
- Pray that the truth of God's love would sink deep in your heart and provide assurance for your identity and purpose.
- Pray for unity and love in the church. Pray that you would reflect God's love in every relationship you have, including the most challenging ones. Pray that God would draw those who are far from Him to Himself.



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