

Finding What We Are Looking For  
John 1:1-5  
(Grace, February 21, 2010)

## I. Introduction

Two weeks ago, I spoke about the reality that exists for billions of people on this planet.

The reality is that no matter what they do or don't do – they still haven't found what they are looking for.

This is one of the primary points of the book of Ecclesiastes – listen to the author: “*This is my conclusion,’ says the Teacher. ‘I discovered this after looking at the matter from every possible angle. 28 Though I have searched repeatedly, I have not found what I was looking for.’*” (Ecclesiastes 7:27-28, NLT)

He has searched repeatedly, he has built colossal buildings, amassed enormous wealth, written thousands of proverbs, had hundreds of beautiful women available to him whenever he wanted them, and he is considered to be the wisest of all men on the earth at this time, but he still has not found what he is looking for.

Have you truly found what you are looking for? Do you know who you are and what your **purpose** is in this life?

Why do you think Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life* is one of the best selling books of all time, having sold over 30 million copies?

Because most of us want to understand who we are and what we were created for.

How will we ever find what we are looking for?

Two weeks ago I introduced three thoughts that I believe are critical to embrace if we are ever going to truly find what we are looking for, even as those who call themselves Christians.

1. Understanding God as Trinity
2. Embracing the church as community
3. Committing to God's goal for humanity – transformation

I sincerely pray that as we look at each of these over the next few weeks that this may help you find what you are looking for.

## II. Understanding God as Trinity

Let me begin by saying that while we do not find the word Trinity in Scripture, it is abundantly clear that God is triune in nature.

I am not going to get bogged down in the deep intricacies and understandings of theologians over the centuries who have debated the exact nature of the Trinity. [briefly explain what I mean – three personalities, three modes, etc.]

At this point, I just want to share a few Scriptures with you that seem to clearly indicate the triune nature of God and then try to explain why this is so critical to us in finding what we are looking for in life.

#### A. The Trinity in Scripture

*“In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.”* (Genesis 1:1, NLT)

In the very first verse in Scripture, we are introduced to the most vital understanding we all need to comprehend and yield to: In the beginning **God**.

All things must begin with God. Without God nothing makes any sense.

But this is not just some vague God. This God is introduced to us in Scripture as **Elohim** and is clarified even further throughout the rest of Scripture until the ultimate definition of who He is is revealed to us through Jesus Christ.

But even here in verse 1 there is something unique, because *Elohim* is the plural form of *Eloha*. *Eloha* can refer to any deity, but Scripture from the first verse uses the plural form, which indicates that this God is the Supreme God.

I find it interesting (in spite of those who argue that the plurality of God’s name is *only* meant to emphasize that this God is the supreme God) that God begins by referring to Himself in the plural form.

*“Then God said, ‘Let **us** make human beings in **our** image, to be like **ourselves**.’”* (Genesis 1:26, NLT)

The point is that from the very beginning it seems clear that there is some kind of plurality to God – not that there is more than one God, but some kind of plurality in His nature.

Here is one more Old Testament passage that seems to indicate that God has a Son.

*“Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!”* (Proverbs 30:4, NIV)

Now throughout the Old Testament we have references to “one who is coming” and also numerous references to the Spirit of God, but it is not until the New Testament and the coming of Jesus that we begin to see more clearly the Triune nature of God.

Listen to this passage from the opening verses of the Gospel of John.

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”* (John 1:1-5, NRSV)

What does this passage remind you of? [Genesis 1:1]

John intentionally begins his Gospel by clearly portraying Jesus (the Word) as God.

So this makes it clear that Jesus is God, but why do we think the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son?

*“And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”*  
(Matthew 3:16-17, NRSV)

*“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”* (2 Corinthians 13:14, NLT)

*“God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.”* (1 Peter 1:2, NLT)

B. Why the Trinity is important to my daily life

I cannot overemphasize how critical it is to understand God as Trinity. Why is that?

**First**, we as followers of Jesus Christ do not worship some vague God or higher power.

Our faith is not in some celestial force or being. It is not in some Santa Claus god, the big man upstairs, or anything else of our own imaginations.

If you want to find what you are looking for, you must come to know and put your absolute trust in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This God is a very specific God with a specific character and expectations.

Culturally, we do not want to be bothered by a specific Deity. We prefer a vague kind of force, higher power, or pantheistic god. The only problem is that a vague god is difficult to relate to and enter into a meaningful relationship with.

I am convinced that a vague god made in our own image can never truly meet the deepest needs of our heart and life.

The problem is that many who call themselves Christians spend so little time reading and studying the Bible that they are still trying to follow a vague notion of God.

As followers of Christ, we serve a specific deity, a God we can know on some level, who has clearly communicated to us what is needed to enter into that divine relationship and has provided the means to do so through Jesus Christ.

This relationship is mediated by the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of our sins and reveals to us the wonder of the Cross, leading us to repentance so that we can experience forgiveness and enter into a covenant relationship with the Father.

This specific God also gives clear guidelines on how to live and walk in His blessing. To follow these clear guidelines brings life; to ignore them promotes death.

As Christians we do not believe in Jesus alone, because we need more than a redeemer/savior. We do not believe in the Father/Creator alone, because we need more than a ruler/parent. We do not believe in the Spirit alone, because we need more than a comforter/guidance counselor.

We worship the triune God of the Scriptures who is all that I just stated and so much more!

**Second**, when we embrace God as Trinity we see perfect love in the context of a **relational community**.

The Trinity reveals a God in relationship: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are engaged in eternal communion. And this relationship is shared with all Christians who have been baptized into the Triune name.

The social significance of understanding God as Trinity is powerful. The Trinity provides a model for belonging to a community, specifically the church as well as society as a whole.

To be in community is to be in relationship. It meets one of our deepest needs – the need to belong.

The more we grow in our understanding of God as triune, the more we will be drawn into community. For the two are somehow divinely interrelated. Our love for God grows and so then does our love for people; as we interact with one another we grow in our understanding of God.

For God to reveal Himself as Father speaks not only of a function, but that He is a Father to something. The term “father” is relational.

If you look at the relationship of the Father with Jesus, especially through the Gospel of John, you see the yearning of Jesus to be in right relationship with His Father. This relationship is something He delights in.

*“The Father and I are one.”* (John 10:30, NLT)

*“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”* (John 5:19, NLT)

*“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.”* (John 15:9-10, NLT)

But Jesus did not come to only speak of His love for the Father and His Father’s love for Him. He has invited us into this relationship and has given us the Holy Spirit to facilitate that:

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”* (John 14:16-17, NLT)

And the love of the Father is not only for the Son, but for all of His creation, including you.

*“Then you will ask in my name. I’m not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, 27 for the Father himself **loves you dearly** because you love me and believe that I came from God. 28 Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father.”* (John 16:26-28, NLT)

*“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”* (John 3:16-17, NLT)

Oh, that we would enter into the divine communion of God Himself and as we do so we will experience the depths of His love as we never have before.

Out of that relationship we then enter fully the divine community of His people here on earth.

Although it is far from perfect, we are filled with the love of God and we exercise that to all people, not only in the church, but also in our homes and places of work.

### III. Application – Our Father in Heaven

Jesus invites you to call upon God personally as a Father. He teaches us to pray, “Our Father who is in heaven.”

Now I know that many of our fathers either did not relate to us or were a very poor example of God’s love for us, and this is why we so desperately need to know the God of the Bible.

God is your Heavenly **Father** – the one who created you and longs to give you a sense of purpose.

Jesus is your Heavenly **Brother** who gave His life for you so that you might enter into the divine love of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit is your Heavenly **Comforter** who leads you into all truth, fills you with the fruit of the Spirit, empowers you to live for God, and facilitates your relationship to the Father through the Son.

Powerful stuff.

Invite people into relationship with the triune God.

Communion – take together and say the Nicene Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.