

# Distinctions within the Holy Trinity

...and what they mean to you

Pastor Dan Arcilla, January 7, 2024, PM Service, Sermon 4 of 7 - Trinity Series

**Introduction:** The culture is dismantling traditional distinctions among people. These are direct attacks against God's design for humanity, rooted in His own triune being. But **DISTINCTION** of persons is a God-given concept that comes directly from God Himself. We've already learned that **GOD IS ONE in essence**. As BA Ware states >

This brings up the question:

**Q: If each person of the Godhead is equally God, are there any real differences between them?**

**A:** The members of the Godhead are not distinguished by being or essence, but rather in **roles** and **relationships**. Each Person plays a primary role in the Trinity, based on the relationships they have with one another, and the world. The Trinity displays God's **unity in distinction**.

**Main point:** *Since we are created in the image of the triune God, both His unity, and holy distinctions ought to shine forth in all areas of our lives.*

*"there is one and only one God, eternally existing and fully expressed in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead is equally God, each is eternally God, and each is fully God—not three gods but three Persons of the one Godhead. Each Person is equal in essence as each possesses fully and simultaneously the identically same, eternal divine nature, yet each is also an eternal and distinct personal expression of that one and undivided divine nature."*  
- Bruce A. Ware

## I. Understand the Doctrine: Unity in Distinction

### A. Distinctions are revealed in God's RELATIONS.

#### 1. God's NAMES reveal order, authority, submission, and love within the Trinity

Distinctions within the Godhead are revealed in the "family" names God reveals Himself with, and how the Father, Son, and Spirit relate to one another and the world. The Gospel of John reveals much about intertrinitarian relationships, especially that of Father and Son. Here is a primary example from John 5:

**John 5:19-23** *Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

Within His triune being, God is characterized by divine order, authority, submission, and love.

- The Father is supreme in authority among the persons of the Godhead.
- The Son submits to the Father's authority and does His will.
- The Spirit submits to the will of the Father and Son.
- They are unified in purpose but diverse in role.

## 2. Each Person loves the another.

- a) **John 14:31** – *I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.*
- b) **John 15:9-10** – *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love*

## 3. Each Person delights in exalting the other.

### *The Father delights in exalting the Son*

- a) **John 5:23** “...so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.
- b) **John 8:54** “Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’;”
- c) **John 17:1** – “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,
- d) **2 Pet 1:17** – “For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”—

### *The Son delights in exalting the Father*

- e) **John 8:28-29** – “28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

## 4. These relationships are eternal

**1 Cor 15:25-28-25** *For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.*

## **B. Distinctions are revealed in God’s CREATION.**

### **1. The FATHER was the ARCHITECT, originator and initiator.**

- a) *Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*
- b) *Revelation 4:11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”*
- c) *Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image...”*

### **2. The Son was the AGENT, maker and builder.**

- a) *John 1:1-3 “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 apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”*

- b) *Psalm 33:6 “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made”*
- c) *1 Corinthians 8:6 “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom (originator) are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom (agency) are all things, and we exist through Him.”*
- d) *Colossians 1:16 “For by Him [the Son] all things were created...all things have been created through Him and for Him*
- e) *Hebrews 1:2 “in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”*

### **3. The SPIRIT was ACTIVE, life-giver, empowering the process.**

- a) *Genesis 1:2 “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving [hovering, brooding] over the surface of the waters”*
- b) *Psalm 33:6 “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host..” (Breath = Hebrew רוּחַ (rûah) or “spirit”)*
- c) *Psalm 104:30 “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created...”*

## **C. Distinctions are revealed in God’s SALVATION.**

### **1. We’re CHOSEN by FATHER: The Father is the ARCHITECT of salvation. He planned it and sent His Son to achieve it.**

- a) *Ephesians 1:3-6 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*
- b) *Cf. John 3:16, Gal 4:4, I John 4:9-10*

### **2. We’re RESCUED BY THE SON: The Son ACCOMPLISHED of salvation. He is the executor of the Father’s will.**

- a) *Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed with every spiritual blessing... in Christ.”*
- b) *Ephesians 1:5 “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ*
- c) *Ephesians 1:6 “His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”*
- d) *Ephesians 1:7 “In Him we have redemption through His blood... forgiveness...”*
- e) *Cf. John 6:38, Heb 10:5-7, 1 Pet 3:18*

### 3. We're **SEALED BY THE SPIRIT**. The Spirit **APPLIES** salvation to us.

- a) *Ephesians 1:13-14 "13 In Him... you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 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."*
- b) *Applied through regeneration – John 3:5-8*
- c) *Applied through sanctification – Rom 8:13, 15:16, 1 Pet 1:2*
- d) *Applied by empowering our service – Acts 1:8, 1 Cor 12:7-11*
- e) *Cf. John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7*

## II. Apply the Doctrine: Reflect the Trinity in Life

As human beings created in His image, we should pursue the God-given divine order, authority, submission, and love in all areas of life.

**Marriage**

**Singleness**

**Family**

**Sexuality**

**Church**

**Worship**

**Work**

**Ethnicity**

**Life Goals**