

Sermon Mark S. Aites
THE NATURE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION:

1. On one occasion, years ago, on the Art Linkletter show, a boy was asked, which came first, the chicken or the egg; the little boy responded, the chicken; because God can't lay eggs."
2. Although we recognize the humor in the little boy's answer, it is a reminder that there are subjects which we may not fully comprehend; and among them, the subject of God.
3. Paul recognized this as he stood on Mars Hill and saw the rampant idolatry of Athens: **Acts 17:29** *"Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising."*
4. You recognize that God is not made of stone, or some precious metal, like the idols; but do you understand the nature of God and the truths concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit?
5. I do not claim with arrogance that I possess all of the answer concerning God.
 - 1) There are times that I must accept that there are certain truths that I may never know (**Deut. 29:29**).
 - 2) But I do believe that God has revealed to us a number of things that we can know about God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE ESSENCE.

- A. His eternal nature: **Psa. 90:2** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*
Psa. 102:27 *But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*
 1. It is difficult in our finite minds to conceive of something having no beginning and no ending.
 2. Every thing that we are familiar with physically has an origin, and eventually an ending; but not so with God.
 3. There has never been a time that God did not exist, and there will never be a time that He will not exist.
- B. God is also Spirit.
 1. **John 4:24** *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*
 2. Bro. Ed Meyers: "It is not possible to illustrate, in the final analysis, a spirit by any known material substance. It is simply that which is unseen, but real. For example, nobody has ever seen the spirit of life within a human body; but we all believe and know that it exists."
 3. Song: "Yes I believe, that God is real."
 4. Although God is not seen, the evidence of His existence remains:
Rom. 1:20 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*
- C. God is also immutable or unchangeable.

1. **Mal. 3:6** *"For I am the Lord, I do not change..."*
2. Now it is true that God's will at times has changed.
 - 1) **Gen. 6:6** *And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*
 - 2) But what we see in this verse is a change of mind or will, but not a change of essence.
- D. And we might add also, that God is self-sufficient.
 1. While it is true, that as human beings we often require the help of others; in contrast, God does not rely upon or seek out another source for help.
 2. **2 Cor. 3:5** *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*
- E. Further, God is wondrous in that He is absolute holiness.
 1. **Hab. 1:13** *"Thou art of purer eyes..."*
 2. As noted earlier, God is not bound by time, since He is eternal in nature.
 3. Consider that God never has, does not now, nor ever will sin.
 4. Even when Jesus was dying upon the cross, God had to withdraw His presence from the Lord because Jesus bearing the sins of man upon that cross.
 5. **Mt.27:46** *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*
- F. When we consider the essence of God we know that God is:
 1. Eternal
 2. Without physical form or substance
 3. Unchangeable
 4. Totally self-sufficient
 5. Absolutely holy, without sin.
 6. And possesses total and complete knowledge, presence, and power.

II. GODHEAD.

- A. **Deut. 6:4** *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.*
 1. There are in fact numerous passages of scripture which affirm there is one God.
 2. And yet, the Bible also affirms the plurality of God.
- B. The often heard expression is the doctrine of the Trinity.
 1. **Trinity** is from the Latin word, *trinus* = triple.
 2. The word *Trinity* is not used in scripture, but the term *Godhead* is.
 3. The Godhead is mentioned in 3 passages in scripture: **Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9**
 4. The NKJV renders it as the *Divine Nature*.
- C. One of the most concise definitions of the Godhead states: "There are 3 persons within the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these 3 are one God..." (Ibid.)
- D. The Bible affirms that each of the 3 persons within the Godhead are God; in other words, each possess the qualities of the Divine nature.
 1. Father:
 - 1) In **John 6:27**, Jesus used the expression God the Father.
 - 2) **Phil. 2:11** *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the*

glory of God the Father.

- 3) Some 51 times in the Gospel accounts, Jesus states that God is His Father.
2. Son:
 - 1) Referred to as the Son of God some 208 times in the New Testament.
 - 2) But He is also referred to as God, by the Father Himself: **Heb. 1:8** *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*
 - 3) **John 1:1-3,14**
3. Holy Spirit:
 - 1) **Acts 5:3-4** *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."*
 - 2) Notice that in **vs 3**, Peter speaks of them lying to the Holy Spirit; and then affirms in **vs 4** that they have lied to God.
 - 3) Some 26 times in Scripture the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God.
- E. The affirmation of these truths in no way make us tritheistic (3 Gods) or pantheistic (many Gods).
- F. We affirm there is one God, but that one God manifests Himself to us in 3 distinct persons.
- G. One of the greatest affirmations of this uni-plural concept is found in the Old Testament.
 1. Among the names which are translated *God* is the word *Elohim*.
 2. It is a word that occurs some 2570 times in the Old Testament.
 3. It is a remarkable word in that it signifies plurality, yet is used with a singular pronoun.
 4. For example: **Deut. 32:39** *"Now see that I, even I, am He, And there is no God besides Me..."*
 5. We observe that there are three personal singular pronouns used in this verse: I, He, and Me; and yet the word for God is plural.
- H. We can use also as an excellent example, **Gen. 1:1**
 1. God was the agent in creation, and yet Moses, the writer of Genesis, used the plural *Elohim*.
 2. As Moses is writing by inspiration of God, why would the plural word be used; yet the verse suggests singularity.
 3. Are you aware that all 3 distinct persons of the Godhead are said to be involved with the origin of all things, although we know that the Word (the Son of God) was the actual agent in creation?
 4. Father:
 - 1) **Psa. 100:3** *Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*
 - 2) **1 Cor. 8:6** *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things...*
 5. Son:
 - 1) **John 1:3** *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

- 2) **Col. 1:16-17** *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers...*
6. Spirit:
 - 1) **Gen. 1:2** *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*
 - 2) **Job 33:4** *The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*
7. Indeed God created all things; but the creation was the work of absolute and perfect unity, of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- I. We also should observe the word which is translated as Lord or Master; the word *adonai*.
 1. In this form of the word, it is also plural.
 2. **Psa. 110:1** *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*
 3. If you observe the singular and plural of the verse, you find, *The Lord* (singular) *said unto my Lord* (plural) *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*
 4. It is a strong affirmation that the Father was speaking to the Son in the Godhead.
- J. Aside from these words, which also have the marvel of the use of plural pronouns.
 1. **Gen. 1:26** *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*
 - 1) Here we find two plural pronouns.
 - 2) Some have thought that God was speaking of the angels; but the angels had no part in the creation, save rejoicing at the event (**Job 38:7**).
 2. In **Gen. 3:22**, following the sin of man; *And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.* (again we have the plural pronoun for God)
 3. In **Gen. 11:7**, with the problem at the tower of Babel: *...let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.*
 - 1) Again we find the clear usage of the plural pronoun.
 - 2) And yet we know it has reference to God.
 4. And we can also add **Isa. 6:8**, in Isaiah's vision: *Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*
 5. Thus we have 4 passages of scripture which use the plural pronoun in reference to God.
- K. Now I am aware that there are certain religious groups which deny the Godhead or Trinity.
 1. Among the most damaging arguments to those who deny the triune Godhead, is the event of Jesus' baptism.
 2. **NKJV Matt. 3:16-17** *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.*

17 *And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

3. Observance of the text shows that the Son is upon the earth, the Spirit is seen descending and alighting upon Jesus, and the Father is speaking from heaven.
4. Some years ago, in the Jackson-Ferguson Debate, Ferguson, maintained that since God can be everywhere at the same time, it was possible for Him to be seen on earth, in the process of descent, and to be heard from heaven.
5. Several years ago, one of my instructors in the East Tenn. School of Preaching, in a debate noted the fallacy in Ferguson's argument: If his doctrine is true: (from David Lipe Lectures)
 1. There were 3 persons in one place at the same time.
 2. Jesus was praying to Himself.
 3. Jesus saw Himself descending upon Him.
 4. Jesus talked to Himself.
 5. Deception is going on in this text.
 6. Jesus was a ventriloquist.
 7. The truth of the matter is, the Bible repeatedly affirms that there is one God, who manifest Himself in 3 distinct persons.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP.

- A. Having established the one God in 3 persons, we need to understand their relationship with each other.
- B. While the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, they truly are distinct in person, in relationship, in works.
 1. For example: God the Father is the architect of the plan of redemption for saving man.

John 5:30 *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*
 2. While the Father is the architect, the Son came to do the work of redemption (**Luke 19:10**).
 3. The Holy Spirit's task was the application of what the Son had done, in the work of regeneration and sanctification.
 4. It was through the Spirit, by means initially of the spoken word, and later the written, that man was told of the Son's work, to initiate faith, repentance, and obedience in baptism; that man might be forgiven of his sins.
- C. In order that man might be saved, what we also find here was the subjection of the Son.
 1. Although we will examine this in depth in 3 weeks, Lord willing, scripture does reveal that from eternity there was an equality in the Godhead.
 2. In speaking of Christ, **Phil. 2:6** *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*
 3. The word *equal* means equal in number, size, and quality.
 4. In **Phil. 2** Paul conveys that indeed there was a time when the Son was equal with the Father; but God's scheme of redemption necessitated a change.
 5. It was necessary for the Son to subject Himself to the Father for our benefit.

6. Because of the sins of man, it was necessary for their to be an adequate sacrifice for our sins.
7. And the only sacrifice which could remit all of man's sins, would have to be a perfect and sinless sacrifice.
8. The only possibility for a sinless and perfect sacrifice would be for the Son of God to die on the cross.
9. Because of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, it was the Father's will that the 2nd person in the Godhead be made in the likeness of man (**Phil. 2:7**).
10. **Matt. 1:23** *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*
11. **Phil. 2:8** *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

CONCLUSION:

1. The marvel of the Godhead is difficult to comprehend.
2. It is hard to fathom the wondrous nature of God; absolute sinless perfection creating man, even knowing that man would sin.
3. It is hard to fathom the Divine nature, and such a love that would cause the Father to send the Son to take human form to die on the cross.
4. And also, to comprehend that the Son would voluntarily leave heaven to suffer that we might be saved.
5. **1 John 4:19** *We love him, because he first loved us.*
6. It is hard to understand the nature of God, in that He would afford us a means that we can be saved through His Holy Spirit.
 - 1) We know in fact the the word is the sword of the Spirit (**Eph. 6:17**).
 - 2) **James 1:21** *"Receive with meekness..."*
 - 3) **Phil. 1:21** *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*
7. Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? (the anointed of God; God who was manifest in the flesh, and raised to sit in glory at the right hand of the Father?)
8. Do you believe that Jesus is God; that He truly is deity; and of the divine nature? (**John 8:24**).
9. Based upon that, are you willing to repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of your sins?