

Worshipping the Holy Trinity
Lesson 10: Communion with the Father

I. Communion with the Triune God: Trinitarian Order Revisited

“ ... [The] doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God and comfortable dependence on him.”

-1689 Baptist Confession (2:3)

Salvation is...¹

-from the Father (as the source and initiator)

-through the Son (as the means and executor)

-by the Holy Spirit (as the power and finisher).

“**[The doctrine of appropriations]** is that common axiom of divines...that what works all three person do towards us...though they have all a joint hand in them, yet they are attributed more especially to one person than to another.”

-**Thomas Goodwin** (17th century Puritan)

Creation is appropriated (attributed especially) to the Father (Rev. 4:11→Rev. 5:10)

Redemption to the Son (Rev. 5:10→Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24)

Sanctification to the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1:2; Tit. 3:5; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11)

II. Communion with the Father in _____

1. Love in _____

2. Love in _____

3. Love in _____

4. Love in _____

¹This kind of language is reflected in writings throughout church history, including the Belgic Confession: “The Father is the cause, origin and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the Holy Ghost is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, have each his personality, distinguished by their properties; but in such wise that these three persons are but one only God.” The Belgic Confession (1560 A.D.)

Quotes used in the Lesson

“All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that ‘God is love’. But they seem not to notice that the words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.”

-C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

“Flesh and blood is apt to have very hard thoughts of [the Father] — to think he is always angry, yea, implacable; that it is not for poor creatures to draw nigh to him; that nothing in the world is more desirable than never to come into his presence... “I knew thou wast an austere man,” saith the evil servant in the [parable]...

...How few of the saints are experimentally acquainted with this privilege of holding immediate communion with the Father in love! With what anxious, doubtful thoughts do they look upon him! What fears, what questioning are there, of his good-will and kindness! At the best, many think there is no sweetness at all in him towards us, but what is purchased at the high price of the blood of Jesus. It is true, that alone is the way of communication; but the free fountain and spring of all is in the bosom of the Father...

The Lord takes nothing worse at [our] hands...than such hard thoughts of him... [For] how unwilling is a child to come into the presence of an angry father!

...Let us then eye the Father as love. Look not on him as an always [threatening] father, but as one most kind and tender... Would a soul continually eye his everlasting tenderness and compassion, his thoughts of kindness that have been from of old, his present gracious acceptance, it could not bear an hour’s absence from him.”

-John Owen, *Communion with God*

“What is a Christian? The question can be answered in many ways, but the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all...

Adoption... is the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification... To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater.”

-J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*