

Title: THE TRINITARIAN PRESENCE OF GOD, 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14.
(Chatham, NJ; 06/19/11, AM) [Pd – Two-Point Outline]

Theme: The doctrine of the Trinity was a unique development in the history of Christian thought; God became present in the church and in the believer through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Purpose: To point out important Scriptures relating to the nature of the Holy Spirit, and to insist that his transcendent power to draw us to God is still present in the world.

Introduction:

1. Although the word trinity cannot be found in Scripture, the teaching that God is three persons in one is both widely accepted and essential to our faith.
2. It is widely accepted because of the revelation about the Holy Spirit that Jesus teaches, and it is essential because Christ is present through the presence of the Spirit.
3. We live in an age that prefers to cast aside any notion of something that transcends the physical world.
4. The presence of God's spirit challenges that.
5. Consider the Trinity.

I. Doctrine of the Trinity Focusing on the Holy Spirit.

A. Scripture

1. Matthew 28:16-20, the baptismal formula calls upon all three names; consolidating them into one indicates something of their authority and their relationship.
2. 2 Corinthians 13:14, in a different context and with a different purpose in mind again this makes reference to all three; grace, love, and fellowship may be attached to a particular person, but all three are things we receive from God.
3. Acts 5:3-4, Peter equates lying to God and lying to the Holy Spirit; in doing so he tells us something about the nature of the Holy Spirit.
4. John 16:13-15, the Holy Spirit's role is interconnected with the Father and the Son; he will glorify Christ who possesses all that the Father possesses.
5. These are only a small taste of what it took for the early church to conclude that the nature of God contained a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each one fully God by nature but each one distinct from the other.
6. To explain it for human understanding demands simple metaphors for a difficult concept: the shamrock, the sun, the family (mother, father, children).

B. The Holy Spirit's Power within Us.

1. The power of miracles was only one significant element of what the Holy Spirit was meant to do; Hebrews 2:4 notes that these things witnessed to the message of the Gospel, and that Gospel provides the power for repentance and salvation.
2. Galatians 5:22-23, the Holy Spirit produces an entirely different set of behaviors than does the sinful flesh.
3. When Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit," (16 & 25) he means for us to allow the Spirit to produce these things within us.
4. The Spirit's power to produce these things is how we see God in our lives.
5. Romans 8:5-17, living according to the Spirit gives life and assurance.
6. It is a mistake to expect only the miraculous as a sign of the Spirit's presence when he is present in more powerful ways that change our hearts. This is the real beauty of his presence.

II. The Way the Wind Blows, John 3:8

- A. Some scientists insist that the physical world is all there is.

1. Eugenie Scott, executive director of the National Center for Science Education, authorized a document that stated, "Science posits that there are no forces outside of nature. Science cannot be neutral on this issue."
2. There are admittedly many scientists who disagree with her, but this position is also taken by many scientists. (Scientific materialism or Naturalism)
3. Here is how one author describes our problem with this, "Being taught that science is how we discover the only objective truths we can know, and being encouraged to pursue lifestyles that assume there is no life after death, they [children] eventually arrive at the unspoken conclusion: Human beings are material objects and nothing more." (*Salvo*, Issue 17, p. 6)
4. It is no wonder that satisfying our carnal appetites becomes the greatest good.

B. Seeing the wind blow.

1. We believe that we have immortal souls, that God created us with moral consciences to exercise self-control, to develop virtuous habits, and to contemplate the wonder of our existence knowing there is something more.
2. We know it when we see the spirit at work in others; we see the wind in the trees.
3. I recently read about a blogger known as "The Raving Atheist" who announced his conversion to Christianity and changed the blog to "The Raving Theist."
4. What tipped the scales toward belief was the kindness of people he met in the pro-life movement.
5. Their faith in God gave them a selfless dedication to their cause as well as a goodness about them that was infectious. (Power of the Holy Spirit?)
6. During Hurricane Katrina at least one journalist admitted that it was the churches who responded generously and willingly.
7. Trace history back even further and you'll see that for centuries Christians have set up hospitals and other humane institutions.
8. In the middle ages when pagans abandoned plague-ridden cities, Christians stayed because they believed it was their God-given duty to care for the sick.

Conclusion:

1. All of these are directly related to the power of the Holy Spirit within the Christian to empower him with the fruit that is first and foremost love—incidentally the definitive characteristic of God.
2. Don't believe in any sort of thing beyond this life? Explain all that.
3. It is the Holy Spirit we call the third person of the trinity that does all this in us.
4. To those of us who have the Holy Spirit I say what Paul says, "Stir up the Holy Spirit within you," "Set your minds on the things of the Spirit," and "Walk by the Spirit."
5. Live with the transcendent wonder and power of God who lives in you by the presence of his Holy Spirit.