

Sermon Transcript from 31st August 2025 – The Trinity and Christian Living

References: Romans 8

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Sermon Summary

The message explores the profound implications of the **Trinity** for Christian living, particularly as revealed in **Romans 8**. It explains how the **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit** work in unison to provide **salvation**, offering believers **no condemnation** through **Christ Jesus's sacrifice**. Furthermore, it details the **Holy Spirit's transformative role** in **spiritual development**, enabling individuals to become more like Jesus. Finally, it highlights how the **Trinity serves as a model for community**, fostering a deep, intimate relationship with God as a loving Father and guiding communal life within the church.

Link to the Start of the Sermon (on YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/FKqmN08uYZs?t=2140>

Sermon Transcript

Morning everybody. Thank you for inviting me to come today and talk about Romans 8 verses 1-17.

I love talking about Romans and chapter 8 in particular, I consider it one of those [that] God breathed. We know that.

We're on the mountaintops looking down and understanding God's plan as we see it in front of us. And I think Romans Chapter 8 is full of that and it's got those incredibly powerful encouraging verses. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And later on, we won't get to that this morning, but and later on in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. It's one of the high points. So, thank you so much. There is, of course, the small matter that you can't get to Romans 8 without going through Romans 1 to 7. So, you have to understand that no one is righteous, not even one. And you have to get to grips with the fact that the wages of sin are death.

So that there's more to the story, but I'm going to take it as read that we understand those things and concentrate on these the high points in in Romans 8. As I say, I love speaking about Romans, but for me growing up the word and growing up here, the word Trinity felt like a big imposing theological word.

It was like that really complex equation in math that made your head hurt. We all have studied maths at school and whether we [were] somebody who struggled from the very first minute right up to Steven Hawking, there's a point at which the math just gets too complicated and your head hurts.

And that that was true for me. I remember the day it was true for me. We were doing a thing called hyperbolics in A-level maths that I have never used. There is maths I regularly use and when people say you never use the maths I say yes you do. You just don't know you're doing it.

But that bit I've never really used... our teacher Mr. Beto who was a very brilliant mathematician. I'm sure he could have had a career in academia as a mathematician if he wanted. It was learned in the in the

days of chalk on blackboard. You know when those roller boards, remember those? And he had gone through several and he got round and had to wipe out the first one and start again of those. And then several of us in the class said, "Sorry, sir. We really don't understand it. Could [you] try again." And he just went back and just wrote exactly the same things because he couldn't even get to grips with the fact that we couldn't understand this thing that was natural to him.

I find the trinity a bit like that.

That moment in mass when your head hurts, you know? It's important. You know, it's foundational, but trying to get your head around three in one just makes you want to throw your hands up and say, "Can't we talk about something simpler, please?"

But here's the thing. The Trinity isn't just an abstract idea to be debated by theologians. I have consulted some theologians in preparing for this morning, in particular, Tom Wright, whose name I'm sure you hear fairly regularly because I know dad reads him at least. And John Mark Comer an American theologian and Charles Spurgeon, John Stow have consulted some theologians on this but it isn't just an abstract idea for those people.

It's about how God actually is father, son, and holy spirit.

And if that's the reality of God, it's also therefore about how that reality changes everything about our reality. It's about how God loves us, how God saves us, and how God is forming us.

And nowhere does it come to life quite like it does in Romans 8. To the extent that it says life by the spirit on the bit I printed out of the of the Bible passage this morning, Paul in this chapter shows us the trinity is deeply personal, deeply practical, and utterly powerful.

So, let's jump in if we could have the next slide.

The trinity and salvation. So that's just the Bible verse there which Grace read so beautifully for us. So we're one we're looking at 1 to 4. So Paul kicks off Romans with one of the most liberating statements in the entire Bible... "therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." That's verse one there.

Think of about that for a second. No condemnation. What does it mean?

It means the verdict's in and it's not guilty. It means the charges have been dropped. It means the shame, the guilt, the feeling that you're always falling short and deserve judgment are gone. Even that bit some, you know, we get condemned by other people. That bit's gone.

Also, I don't know if you've done this, you get condemned by yourself sometimes and that's gone too. In fact, one of the guides I always use as to whether the Holy Spirit is talking to me is whether I can feel convicted or condemned. If I feel convicted, if I feel the need to change and to do something about it, I and I'm convicted, then I believe that's the Holy Spirit.

If I feel condemned and kind of useless and hanging under the weight of some guilt, then that isn't the Holy Spirit. So, it's all gone. And why is it gone? It's gone because you're in Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus. He says there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Before Jesus, we were stuck. Paul says the law was weakened by the flesh. We couldn't live up to God's perfect standards. It's like having a broken leg and trying to run being told to run a marathon.

The instructions are clear. The goal's good, but just not able to do it. Our brokenness, our sinful nature just kept tripping us up.

But then the father in his incredible love sent his son.

You see how that's the trinity in action beginning. It's the father in his love sent his son. And we'll keep coming back to things like that as we go through the morning. Verse 3 tells us, "For God has done what

the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh." So, Jesus comes as flesh, as tempted, as prone to sin as we are.

But he didn't by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh. And for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. So, you have an act of God and then the obedience and action of Jesus in in in that piece. The father orchestrated this amazing rescue plan. He sent Jesus fully God, fully human, into our messy world.

Jesus didn't just point the way out. He became the way out. He took on it took on the condemnation we deserved. He died our death. He rose again conquering sin and death once and for all. So when you're in Christ, you're connected to him. You have access to everything he is and has done.

And in John 16, Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is the voice in us. convicting of us of our sin, of our need to get right with God.

So, from the first moment, and that's been true, from the first moment you heard the good news and wondered whether it was for you, right up to right now as we daily tried to keep a short account with God.

So that act of rescue involves the father, the son, and the holy spirit working perfectly together. Always has, always will. As the theologian Tom Wright often emphasizes, see salvation isn't just about escaping hell or getting a ticket to heaven someday. It's a rescue that transforms us. It changes us.

Now, the word salvation denotes rescue. Sorry, this is the quote now. Sorry. He says the word the word salvation denotes rescue. Rescue what from? Well, of course, ultimately death. And since it's sin that colludes with the forces of evil and decay. Sin leads to death.

So, we are rescued from sin and death. The father, the son, and the holy spirit working together is the found that's the foundation of our rescue. And that's what it says in those in essence in those first four verses of Romans.

If we can move on to the next bit, the trinity in our spiritual development, living by the spirit. And that's really the bulk of Romans 8:5-13. I didn't put it all up there because it would either be in too small a font for you to read and Grace has read it so nicely for us anyway or it would go over several slides and there'd be that bit where I had to say next slide please as if I was it Chris Whitty used to do that in in the COVID days.

So we're rescued. We're not condemned. But what now?

We're not just waiting for heaven. We're called to live a new life today. And that's where the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, really steps in. Paul contrasts life where you live in the flesh, our sinful nature with living according to the spirit. That's what he does throughout this this this next part of the passage. The spirit is God's God the Father's presence in us, giving us new desires and the strength to follow him.

The spirit gives life, peace, freedom from sin and death. This transformation isn't our own effort. I cannot stand here. I've done this several times here at the past. I've done it many places. I cannot stand here and kind of just by sheer power and willpower make myself more like Jesus. I can't do it. It's an impossible thing. So that's not the way to do it. It's not our own effort. It's a surrender to the Holy Spirit's work. And Ann mentioned that earlier on. That's what it is. It's surrender surrendering to the Holy Spirit.

John Mark Homer describes this. He uses a word called spiritual formation. We went on a we had a course recently in our life group at Jubilee [Church] in Maidenhead which was called practicing the way. And there was an extent to which I was a bit of a cynic about it if I'm honest.

Bit of a confession here because it just some of it just felt like things that had been said perfectly well by other people repackaged in modern language and new words. And formation, well, he uses formation is his word to describe the process by which we become more like Jesus. And there were elements of it that felt to me that were very like the book by a book by Richard Foster called Celebration of Discipline.

I don't know if people remember that book. It was kind of big in the late 70s and the early 80s and so on. But that fundamental truth that we are that the Holy Spirit once we spiritually forms us to be more like Jesus. Again, you've got the spirit doing the work to be for us to be more like Jesus.

It's another expression of the trinity of both of different people parts of the godhead working together.

So, he describes it as spiritual formation the process of being shaped into a person of self-giving love through deepening surrender to Jesus and union with the whole Holy Trinity. It's about letting the spirit continuous continuously mould us to be more like Jesus. And that's really the central message of Romans 8:5-13 that we are continually letting the spirit mould us to become more like Jesus. And [I] talked earlier on about the fruits of the spirit. And I have become there would have been a time in my middle late teens where I would probably have said that the gifts of the spirit were the most important thing and were more important than the fruits of the spirit because they were spectacular and they showed God's work, God's work now.

But I've reached a point where I actually think it's the other way round. I mean, I'm not sure ranking things in God's kingdom is exactly what we're supposed to do, but I would far rather at a future imagined celebration service of my life, people said David was loving. David was patient. David was kind. David was gentle.

That's someone I have got to work on a bit. You know, I'd rather those were the things that people remembered than said, "Well, David gave many words of prophecy or David spoke in tongues regularly."

I want to do those things, but I kind of understand the thing where Paul says, "I would that we did that more, but the most important thing is the people we are and how we are.", we run a thing at our church called Illuminate Life Group for 8 to 11 year olds. And we looked about a year or so ago at the um at the fruit of the spirit. And I put a I think I've done this trick here as well.

I put some numbers down the centre of the room from 1 to 10 and said, "This is a thermometer. I want you to tell me and we how where you think you are in relation to each of the fruit of the spirit." And then we'll have a little chat about why you think that. that and then we'll see how we can pray into it. And we prayed about each of those in choice and when it came and this is just I'd like honouring some of the boys in our group for their honesty because when it came to patience and when it came to self-control and mentioned self-control as well they didn't do what I asked them. They invented a minor scale and they said I'm not I'm not even at one I that and it gave opportunity for some really good conversations with them and some really important prayers about the work of the Holy Spirit in their life.

So, what this bit of Romans shows us is that if we are willing to be moulded by the Holy Spirit we can become more and more like Jesus. And that is why God has sent the Holy Spirit.

So, God has sent the Holy Spirit so we can be more like Jesus. I'm doing it in a triangle in my hands. I didn't even realize I was going to do that. But you can see how that's the trinity at work, can't you?

God sent the Holy Spirit moulds for us to become more like Jesus.

If we can move on to the third bit, which is talk about the Trinity in community, and that That's the last few bits of last few verses of our um section there. And the trinity is a perfect communion community of father, son, and holy spirit. But it also brings us into community.

Paul tells us that those who are led by the spirit are children of God adopted into sonship, allowing us to cry out, "Abba, father." The spirit removes fear and makes us part of God's family. We're co-heirs with Christ. That's what that bit's saying.

Now, Abba, I'm sure you know this. You'll have had it preached many times, but Abba is a really intimate term. It is not God the Father, it's God my daddy and as a father, I can say that that the day when my sons stop went from calling me daddy to calling me dad, they're just a little bit sad, you know. what I mean?

It's just a little bit sad because it indicated that their dependence on me was a little less than it had been.

And there was even a little bit of formality creeping into the relationship that I didn't want there. So, it's a little bit sad, but isn't it incredible that the Holy Spirit gives us the confidence to approach God as our loving father?

So, loving that we can call him daddy. through Jesus his son. So he's not this distant deity kind of like cosmic grandfather that so many so many people who don't really understand God and Jesus think of him as you know cosmic grandfather or an angry tyrant.

There kind of seem to be two things in the media. I've quite often watch clips on my phone of Ricky Gervais explaining his atheism. I'm one of those Christians who believes it's kind of good to listen to what other people what people who aren't Christians are saying about the church so that we can be more effective in our witness and because I find some of them funny if I'm honest but there you go and Ricky Gervais is one of one of those people who definitely has God down as an angry tyrant.

So sometimes he's a cosmic grandfather which isn't what he is or he's a angry tyrant. What he isn't is a loving daddy in the eyes of the world but that's what he is to us, a loving daddy. And that happens because the Holy Spirit gives us the confidence to approach him in that way. And because Jesus died so that we could approach him in that way. It's a family relationship. And that that same family relationship that God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit have is a model there calling us to mutual love and support within the church reflecting the Trinity's love.

So, you know how um the relationship between Jesus and the church is the model that we would use for the relationship between a husband and a wife. Well, the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit living in community is a model for how we should all live together in community as a church.

The trinity models the submission to each other that we're called to in Ephesians 5. You know, Ephesians 5 says we should all submit one to another. Sometimes [we] get hung up on bits of submission like, you know, wives submit to your husbands. Although husbands are also supposed to submit to their wives. That bit gets missed out. And they're also supposed to love their wives as Christ loved the church. Sometimes people don't go on to that bit.

But we are all actually called to submit one to another. All of us. Jesus in Gethsemane models that submission to God's will even though he's fully aware of the cup of suffering facing him.

So, we know he says "father not my will but yours be done."

So, he submits to God, and then in John 16 he submits to the Holy Spirit because he says I tell you the truth it's better for you than I go that I go away when I go away. say, "I will send the helper to you. If I don't go away, the helper won't come." And the helper is the Holy Spirit. And so, he realises, Jesus realises it's best for them that he's not there anymore.

Now, I've got to be honest, I'm not one of those people who volunteers. Most times in ministries when the time has come to has come for that ministry to end, I have realised it a long time after the Holy Spirit and probably quite a while after other people have realized it as well.

We are sometimes inclined to hang on to things because they become a bit part of our identity or we think they're important.

But, actually that isn't what Jesus does. Jesus doesn't want to stay around with the disciples having been their leader, having been in close relationship with them, having preached all these unbelievable things and about to die for them so they could have a relationship with God.

He doesn't want to stay around with them because he knows that the Holy Spirit is the right person to do the next job. Jesus submits to the Holy Spirit at that point and says no it's better that I go because then I can send the helper to you.

And Tom Wright takes us right back to the very start of the passage because he says there's no condemnation because what he terms the spirit law has set you free from the sin law because God has acted in his son and his spirit to condemn sin and provide life.

Each person of the trinity performing their role to enable us to be in a position where there is no condemnation, where we can be in Christ. And John Mark Homer says or highlights in all of Jesus teaching what we call God is in a mysterious but beautiful way a flow of love between the father and the son and the Holy Spirit.

God is a community of love. Each member of the trinity is distinct yet somehow still one. To be with the spirit is to be with Jesus and to be with Jesus is to be with the father so we can enter that flow of love within that inner life of God himself.

We're not meant to live the Christian life in isolation. I know sometimes people do feel called to that and that may well be true. But in general we are not called to live Christian life in isolation. But we are called to be part of his adopted family. growing together displaying [this] personal God's love to the world.

So that's the other thing that we as we live in community that is how we live the gospel and show the love of Christ the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of God to the world. We don't show it on our own. We show it together in how we are together.

[Let's] bring it all together. This is my favourite way to end a sermon. You'll have heard me do this before. I love to answer the so what question.

So the trinity, the loving relationship of father, son, and Holy Spirit is not just a theological concept. That's where I started. It kind of felt like one to me for quite a long time, but it doesn't anymore. And it's not just a theological concept. It's the heart of our faith because it impacts our salvation.

The father sends the son who rescues us from condemnation. It affects our spiritual growth. The spirit transforms and empowers us to be more like Jesus and our community.

We're adopted into God's family and can approach him intimately, calling him "daddy". So, let's keep up some key habits that reflect our three in one God.

Live in the spirit daily. praying to the father through the son. Be fully in Christ. Ask seeking to be more and more like him every day and in [a] loving submissive community with each other.

Amen.