

# How Do I Delight Myself in the Trinity?

## Audio Transcript

*We are back one more time with historian and theologian Michael Reeves talking about his incredibly good book, [Delighting in the Trinity](#). If you're looking for a summer read, consider it. Dr. Reeves serves as the President and Professor of Theology at Union School of Theology in Oxford. Last time, we were talking about creation. So go into this intertrinitarian relationship and explain for us where the act of creation, that impulse, originates.*

Yes, we saw the Father of eternity when we looked at [John 17:24](#) where Jesus says, "Father, you loved me before the foundation of the world." For eternity, the Father has enjoyed, delighted in his servant. That is Isaiah language. He has enjoyed his Son. And what is happening in creation is, as the Father is so delighted in the Son, so he delights to have that love overflow, that there might be many sons — that the Son "might be the firstborn of many brothers" ([Romans 8:29](#)). And so, with this God who is outgoingly gracious in who he is in eternity, eternally loving, it makes sense that he should have many others that he might love.

Now, if you are a single-person god, that just wouldn't make sense. Why would he create? But because the Father has always enjoyed loving the Son, creation seems not an essential thing he has to do at all, but a very characteristic thing for him to do.

*Glorious! All of creation is from God's abundant, trinitarian delight. So let me press in here. You have so clearly made this connection with the Trinity and the beauty of creation in your own life. Now what happens in your mind and in*

*your heart as you behold the beauty of creation? When you see the beauty of creation — mountains, oceans, sunsets — what goes on in your mind and heart?*

Yes, I have so many thoughts. One would be, flying directly out of what we are seeing, that, in creation, I am not simply seeing the omnipotent power of God. And that is something which is true and which, I think, is something that Christians major on when they talk about [Psalm 19:1](#): “The heavens declare the glory of God.” That is true. We do see the power of God. God must be super-cosmically powerful to bring creation about, of course.

But that hasn't explained *why* he has created. He doesn't create because of power. He creates because of his overflowing love. And so, in creation, you see the generosity, the kindness of God. He creates in the first place out of love, and he continues to sustain us, even rebels, because of his ongoing generation and kindness. He placed his stars there to shine in the darkness. I find this so encouraging every morning: the sun rising and driving away the darkness. That is a sort of Genesis 1 picture.

It also reminded me of Jesus, the Light of the World, that I see the purity, beauty, and glory of God proclaimed in the heavens as the sun, like a bridegroom, shines and drives out all darkness, so that every day I find, just as I see the sun rising, I am rejoicing to see God isn't unkind, he isn't ungenerous as I might naturally, as a natural idolater, think. He is so good, so kind, so generous. By creation itself, I am won back to praise him. I am won back to delight in him.

*Yes, amen! At one point in the book you say what we love is more important than what we do. Essentially in the Christian life, the affections are central. That emphasis is also reflected in your title — Delighting in the Trinity — and clearly by writing this book you don't just want to fill minds with good theology about God, but you want to see hearts filled with affection for God. Explain in your own words the place of the affections in our study of God.*

Yes, the affections are so essential to who we are — so core in both sin and salvation. In sin you see it. Why is it that Eve takes the apple, that the action of her sin actually flows out of her affections, where her heart is, that she desires wisdom — she wants to be like God more than she wants to trust God? She has a love for something else rather than a love for God. And that is how sin works in us. The reason I act sinfully is because I have begun to desire sinfully. I have begun to desire something else more than I have desired God. And this is [James 1:15](#): Desire gives birth to sin, and sin gives birth to death.

But this is how we are built, so the same thing works for salvation. I naturally don't desire God. I desire myself. I desire other things. But what the Spirit so kindly does is the Spirit opens my eyes to see the glory and beauty of God, and so wins my heart, such that — and here is what I want in all my preaching, and I make this very clear when I speak, for example, to students and in my church — I want people to see that the living God is more beautiful and more desirable than their sin. And that is the Spirit's work through the Word. The Spirit opens our eyes that we might see Christ.

A key verse the Puritans always turned to in their understanding of sanctification was [2 Corinthians 3:18](#). Richard Sibbes made that verse in many ways the centerpiece of his ministry. And [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) talks about how we are transformed from glory to glory *as we gaze on him*. That is, by looking at him, we become like him, we shine like the Lord because we have become like what we worship. We see how glorious he is and he wins our hearts to him and we want him more than anything else.

*Amen! Delighting in Christ is paradigmatic for Christian growth. We see Christ in Scripture. So connect these themes. What would you say to those of us who find it to be a struggle in the morning when we approach the Bible? We want to delight, but that delight begins with a struggle?*

I think a key thing is to know, *why* are you opening your Bible in the morning? What are you trying to do? People approach their Bibles with all sorts of motivations. And I confess, I approach my Bible every morning with very

confused motivations. And so, we have got to know what we are doing as we are opening our Bible.

Now, it is the truth of who Christ is, it is the light of who Christ is that will cause the heat of desire for him. But we must know that this is why the Scripture is written. John Calvin put it beautifully when he was commenting on John 15. He said that the Lord has given us, the Spirit has breathed out these Scriptures, that we might have a hearty affection, a “cordial embrace of Christ.” That is the point. And so, as we open the Scriptures, let’s cry out, “Lord, let me see your glory, your beauty, your goodness, your kindness, your generosity, *that I might love you afresh.*”

*Yes. And our time is up. I’ll end with this question. Our triune God is eternal. God existed in eternity past, and that changes how we view creation. But God is also eternally triune into the future, and that changes everything about heaven. It seems to me the distinctive feature of what makes heaven heaven is the presence of our trinitarian God. Fill out for us what eternity looks like. What’s to come?*

Oh, what a lovely question. The Spirit will eternally be working in us. We will have spiritual bodies, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, by which he means, these will be real, physical bodies, but animated by the Spirit through and through now. And the Spirit has two works in us. His first work is, he unites us to the Son such that, as the Father has always cherished the Son and seen him as the apple of his eye, so we are embraced by the Father’s love of the Son. So, we can approach the Father as our “Abba,” so that there is an extraordinary status gift the Spirit gives us. And so, we can boldly go to the throne.

But there is more. The Spirit doesn’t simply give us the status of Christ; he gives us the mind of Christ. He turns our hearts so that, as the Spirit opens my eyes, I begin to see who Christ is and enjoy the Son as the Father has eternally enjoyed the Son. And so, I get to enjoy for eternity what has most pleased the Father for eternity. But also, I get to enjoy the Father as my

Father, as the Son has always done. And so, I am brought into this wonderful trinitarian life of joy and love.

We will be in these physical bodies in a renewed creation, and I think this is where people seem to flip-flop. There are some people who get twitchy about the idea that we will actually have a real earth to enjoy because they see, Isn't that a distraction from God? And there are some people who just talk about the joys of the new creation: the messianic banquet and all that. And I want to say, No, the two work together really well, rightly well. They are designed to, in that, we talk about how creation proclaims the glory of the Lord. Through the new creation, we will appreciate the generosity of God more. It will be a part of our ongoing eternal existence that, as we live in the new creation, we will see the glory of God manifest so perfectly, his generosity shown to us so well, that we will delight in him more — and delight in each other, now perfected.

So, there will be this trinitarian life we will revel in in the new creation, and that trinitarian life has been expanded to include the whole family of the Father, which means we will all be enjoying living together with him as brothers and sisters.

*So good. That was historian and theologian Michael Reeves, who serves as the President and Professor of Theology at Union School of Theology in Oxford. He is one of my favorite authors of a number of great books including [Delighting in the Trinity](#). Check it out.*

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