

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 2, Paragraph 3 – “Of God and the Holy Trinity”,
Message # 69 – “Perichoresis is Communion”, Presented in the Adult Sunday
School Class by Pastor Paul Rendall, on March 7th, 2021.**

Paragraph 3 – In this divine and infinite Being there are three subsistences, d) the Father, the Word or Son, and Holy Spirit, of one substance, power, and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, e) yet the essence undivided: the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is f) eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Spirit g) proceeding from the Father and the Son; all infinite, without beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties and personal relations; which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence on him.

d) 1st John 5: 7; Matthew 28: 19; 2nd Corinthians 13: 14; e) Exodus 3: 14; John 14: 11;

1st Corinthians 8:6; f) John 1:14,18; g) John 15:26; Gal 4: 6)

2nd Corinthians 13: 14 – “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” “Amen.”

Here we have a benediction being given here by apostle Paul, a prayer and sincere wish and desire for the saints in the church at Corinth to know. It was a benediction which shows forth the doctrine of the Trinity, and the reality of what we have been studying lately – The Divine Perichoresis; that is, the Mutual Indwelling of the Persons of the Godhead. For the grace being spoken of here, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the very same grace which the Father and the Holy Spirit would together be bestowing with the Son. It would not be a lesser grace than that bestowed by the Father and the Spirit. Nor would it be separate from those Divine Persons when it was given.

And the love of God which is spoken of here, that love which Paul desires each of the saints in the church to know communicated to them from God, experientially in their hearts, that love which we assume is being spoken of as coming to them from the Father specifically; it is not intended by Paul to be separated from the love of the Son or the Spirit. He knew that that this same love mutually indwelled all the Divine Persons, and it would be communicated to the saints there by the Son and the Spirit as one God, mutually sharing that same love.

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, that holy blessing of real spiritual interaction which is by the Spirit communicated to the hearts of the saints in relation to the truth of the hearing of the word of God and their prayers; this great thing that Paul longed for the saints to experience in that church; that fellowship, that communion, was already being shared by all 3 of the Persons in the Godhead. Our communion with God is based upon the Communion which exists between the 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity.

Last Sunday we thought together about the fact that –

1. The Divine Perichoresis is seen in the Mutual Indwelling of the Father and the Son.

We looked at this subject as it is recorded in the Scriptures for us, before time Began and in the Incarnation and Ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We looked at **John 1: 18** – “No one has seen God at any time.” “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” We also saw –

2. The Divine Perichoresis is seen in relation to His earthly ministry being accomplished. There was great love between the Persons of the Divine Trinity in this.

John 17: 20-23 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” “And the glory which you gave Me I have given to them,

that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in me that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and love them as You have loved Me.”

The mutual indwelling, the Divine Perichoresis, that existed between the Father and the Son was a perfect mutual indwelling of love for each other which was shared together as Persons of the Godhead. And the prayer of the Lord Jesus is that those who would believe in Him would have a real spiritual unity united by and through the Person and working of the Holy Spirit, so that the world would know that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, and thus demonstrate this great love to all mankind.

We also looked at John 1: 14 – “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We saw that no one has seen God at any time because He is Spirit. But that when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, we (the apostles, us and all of mankind through their word) beheld His glory, glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He by His life, His words, His works, and the miracles that He did, He has declared Him. He has explained Him, He has (εξηγησατο, from exegeomai) exegeted Him. (made Him known to us and declared what He is, in so many ways, that when we look at Jesus in the Scriptures, we understand the Father as He really is; holy, wise, righteous, loving, good, kind, faithful, and true.

We also looked at John 3: 34 – For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.” “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.”

This verse pictures well, for us, the Divine Perichoresis in the Son of God being sent by the Father, speaking the very words of God because the Father does not give the Spirit by measure to Christ, because Christ is God the Son, beloved of Him from all eternity, and therefore, He has given all things into His hand. There is a mutual indwelling in the Persons of the Godhead which is particularly seen in the earthly ministry of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, today, I would like open up the truth of the Divine Perichoresis in relation to judgement and justice. I want you to turn to –

John 8: 12-16 – “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world.’ “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” “The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.’ “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.’ “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.” “And yet if I do judge My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.”

Now, you can see here the clash of pure and perfect Light with the darkness of the Pharisees thinking. They accuse Him of bearing witness of Himself. They think that He is just a man. Christ is telling them that as the Son of God He is the Light of the world, the One who gives the light of life. He replies to their accusation by telling them that even if He does bear witness of Himself, that His witness is true, because He knew where He had come from, that is from heaven, and He knew where He was going, that is to the cross, to suffer and die for the sins of the world, and more specifically for those who would receive His light of being truth personified, and one with the Father. For He says – “My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. I am with Him, essentially; the Father dwelling in Me and I in Him.

There is the Divine Perichoresis; that Christ’s judgment is one with the Father’s judgment. He is not alone in it. He is with the Father who sent Him. Therefore, He was not simply a man, as they wrongly thought. He was God made manifest in the flesh; the Father doing His works through Him, and agreeing

with all of the Lord Jesus' words and judgment concerning the fact that He had come from heaven, that He was the Light of the World, and that they were judging Him according to the flesh.

3. The Divine Perichoresis is seen in the Sending of the Spirit once the work of Christ was accomplished.

John 14: 15-23 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither see Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see me.” “Because I live, you will live also.” “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.” “And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

So, it will be good for us if we can see the practical outworking of our faith in God and in Christ which is found in these verses. If we love Christ, we will keep His commandments. And Christ here, says He would pray to the Father, and the Father would send the Holy Spirit. Actually, He and the Father would send the Holy Spirit as it says in John 16: 7. When Jesus says in verse 8, “I will come to you, I will not leave you as orphans, He is saying, that He would do this in and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in us is Christ in us. In that day, when the Spirit would come to the Church on the day of Pentecost, and to the heart of every individual believer after that day, each believer in Christ should understand that Christ is in the Father and they are in Christ, and Christ is in them. All of this should be understood in terms of the Divine Perichoresis; the Divine conjoined work of love toward every believer, that the Triune God would love us and manifest Himself to us. We truly ought to glory in this and worship God for this tremendous blessing which flows out of the love between the Divine Persons of the Trinity.

Conclusion:

Listen to Sinclair Ferguson – “The external works of the Trinity are indivisible.” “This is another way of saying that when God acts, He always acts as God the Trinity.” “The fathers of the church had a corresponding statement with respect to God's inner being as Trinity, implying that communications of love between any of the Divine Persons always engage all three Persons.” “Paul's statement that the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God implies as much.” “It means that when Jesus spoke about the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father, He did not exclude the Spirit from the mutual embrace.” “In all God's actions and expressions of love and purpose toward the cosmos, and especially toward men and women made in His image, each Person of the Trinity is engaged.” P. 35 and 36 of *The Trinitarian Devotion of John Owen*.

A little farther on, Ferguson says this on P. 40 of the same book – ...The God of the Bible is the living God – living in Himself, loving within His three Persons, expressing all His attributes in the dynamic interplay of Father with Son, Son with Spirit, Spirit with Father, Father and Son with Spirit, Spirit and Son with Father, Father and Spirit with Son.” “This is what the Greek fathers of the church called Perichoresis – the moving in and out (as in a choreographed dance) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in an eternal self-sufficient inner cosmos of love and holy devotion, and in an endless mutual knowledge. Perhaps the nearest we get to experiencing this is in the discovery of a friendship or love in which we seem both to lose and find ourselves in the apparently unending fascination and satisfaction of knowing, loving and being loved, by another person.” Time itself seems either to stand still or to become like an unending stream; being seems far more significant than doing; being together becomes an all-absorbing, all-consuming delight.”