

Relationship of Jesus and the Father

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[0 : 00] Well, Delighting in the Trinity by Michael Reeves is the book that we started last week, and I get to introduce a little bit more from chapter one.

It was interesting, last week, really, in all three services, there was somewhat of an emphasis and focus on knowing God, and that it's in knowing God where there is eternal life, and that's what eternal life is all about in knowing God.

In my Bible reading and in a memory verse from the past, in Jeremiah 9, 23 and 24, we have really God's own testimony that knowing him is primary and priority.

This is what it says, Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight, declares the Lord. So wisdom, might, riches, all these were items that were highly valued back then and certainly still are highly valued today.

[1 : 25] And nothing wrong in and of themselves. There are good things that we can enjoy. But in this verse and other verses in the scriptures, God really brings to us a much-needed different perspective about what really is to be valued most, even above these things.

And he says that understanding and knowing him is of greater worth and greater value than wisdom, might, and riches.

It's in knowing him that we have something that's worthy to boast of or boast in and glory in. This is what we can glory in. J.I. Packer in his book, Knowing God, makes this short statement about these verses.

He says, Knowing God is a relationship calculated to thrill a person's heart. And he says a lot right there. Knowing God is a relationship calculated to thrill a person's heart.

We need, really, again, that clear, unsolid perspective from God. You know, our minds, our thinking has been distorted by the effects of sin.

[2 : 48] And therefore, in and of ourselves, we would tend to put most value in strength, wisdom, riches, might, all these things that, as I said, are good in and of themselves, but are not really what is most valuable.

And if we would put most value in those things, we would really come up short in delighting in what is ultimately best. We enjoy the good things, but you don't want to miss out on the best thing.

And understanding, and that is understanding and knowing God. And we see Jesus making this statement as well in this verse we heard last week, John 17, 3, in his prayer.

And this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Now I have to admit, that salvation and eternal life was not presented that way to me as I grew up in church.

Grew up outside Buffalo, New York, and was taken to church on a regular basis as a child throughout my life. But really, the Christian life, eternal life, was mostly about going to heaven and not going to hell, which, that's a great thing.

[4 : 12] I can enjoy that and live with a hopeful perspective of what's ahead in the future. But because that's what it was made, mostly made about, most of what was to be enjoyed as a Christian was put off till some future time when I would go to heaven, die and go to heaven, or when Jesus would come and take unto himself those who believe in him.

So I was missing out on a lot of what the Christian life was all about while I was still here in this world. Although, again, I did enjoy this future perspective of being able to be in heaven.

But again, it wasn't so much emphasized being in heaven with Jesus, but it was in heaven in this beautiful place. Well, so understanding that eternal life is about knowing God and enjoying him forever, we should be familiar with that statement, which includes the time in which we're living now in this world.

It's of utmost importance that we know God now in order to enjoy him and to enjoy him fully. Now, last week, from Pastor John, even Pastor Jason, when they were talking about knowing God, they were giving different words and phrases to help us understand more of what that knowing God is all about.

[5 : 50] It's not just knowing facts about God, but certainly that is involved. So I'll just toss out my words and phrases as well to give us an understanding, a richer understanding of what that means to know God.

To know God means to be in committed, personal relationship with him, learning of him, loving him, living in a daily relationship with him, enjoying his various perfections as God.

Now, there's something for you to discuss in your small group tonight. What are some of those various perfections of God that bring delight to us in our daily lives? And at times, what are the things, the situations, the hard attitudes that keep us from experiencing eternal life now in knowing and enjoying the various perfections of God?

I'll let you guys discuss that in small groups tonight and among many other things that you'll discuss. So, that's how we want to know God. So, how do we know God?

We know God through the work of the Holy Spirit as he uses the revelation that God has provided for us in his word and through Jesus Christ.

[7 : 08] God's word is his written revelation for us to know him. It was through those sacred writings that Timothy came to know God that made him wise for salvation.

His mother and his grandmother shared with him these truths of God's word from the written revelation and it was in these writings of scripture that were breathed out by God and the rest of those verses in 2 Timothy 3 14 through 17 that Timothy heard the word of God received that counsel that was good for all of life doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness and it was through those scriptures that he was equipped to know God and really to become the person that would be able to do the work that God had given him to do while he was in this world knowing God in that way.

So, really, it's an act of God's kindness to us to provide his written revelation so we might know him. And it was helpful for me to start thinking this through a little bit more and this perspective of God and his word and him providing me his word because we really can't know a person unless they open up to us and communicate to us.

We can observe people and even one another here. And if I would say, do you know Donnie Engel? Well, yeah, I know Donnie Engel.

He sits in this row of church, you know, and he's married to so-and-so, Jenna, and I see him. He goes to our church. You're just telling me information that you've observed about him.

[9 : 01] But you only get to know Donnie Engel if you sit down and talk with him and he talks back to you and begins to communicate more information about himself that you would not otherwise know and then you can come to more fully appreciate who Donnie Engel is because he was willing to open himself up and communicate to me and to you.

And so that's what we have in God's word. He has made sure that we have this written revelation of himself.

His communication to us so that we could know him. So as you pick up this word, think of it as this is God's communication to me so that I would enter into relationship with him and know him and enjoy him and to love him and without this it would never be possible.

What a kindness that God has shown toward us that we would have him speaking to us in this way. So his written revelation really is an indication that he wants us to know him. I mean if I went up to Donnie and start talking with him and he turned around and walked away that would be an indication.

[10 : 33] He doesn't want me to know him for some reason something's but no, if you talk to Donnie, he'll talk back to you and communicate with you just as God has done with us.

It's an indication. He wants us to know him and his beauty and the glory about him. So that's why we go to the word of God to know him who is worthy to be known.

Oh, there's a nice long quote here from J.I. Packer but it's not included in the notes and I can't include it now either so if you want it you'll just have to ask me for it. But it talks more about that goodness of God and how we can know him. But let's keep moving on. Now God has given us the written revelation that we might know him but he's also given us even as greater, greater revelation to know him in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's in-person revelation of himself so that we can know him. Jesus being God incarnate. I just love that verse that we read usually around Christmas time behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us. [11:59] How impressive is that and awesome is that. Of course once we start understanding who God is it's even more impressive and awesome that here he is God with us.

In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, the word was God. John 1-1 down to verse 14, the word that was with God that was God became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth. So being God incarnate, Jesus presents to us the radiance of the glory of God being the exact imprint of his nature and therefore provides the revelation of God we need to know and enjoy him even more as it says in Hebrews 1, 1-3, long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets but in these last days he spoke to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom also he created the world. He's the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. So being God incarnate, God come, God in the flesh, Jesus is this, what I say, this entry point into the knowing, loving, and enjoying God relationship.

So we want to experience eternal life which is to know God. We have this revelation from God, written revelation where we learn of God the Son, Jesus Christ, and all he has done in order to bring us and move us in that direction of being in relationship with God the Father.

[13:49] So it's by faith in Jesus Christ and all he's done and his righteous life, his death on the cross for sinners, his resurrection that moves a person from being without God, hostile to God, to one who knows God and is a child of God, one who is at peace with God.

And so again, through this, through Jesus Christ, that that new child of God can begin to learn more of God and enjoy living in the reality of who he is even while we're still in this world.

Jesus Christ being the entry point, Jesus Christ being that revelation of God. 1 John 5, 20 through 21, and we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we might know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son, Jesus Christ.

He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. I like the fact that he included that phrase at the end. You know, it's kind of like saying, this is who God is, what Jesus has done, he's brought us understanding to this one true God, eternal life.

Why would you settle for anything less? Keep yourselves from idols. They don't match up. So, keep yourselves from the lesser things, things that might be good in themselves, but things that have replaced and taken the primary place of the God who is greater.

[15:32] Keep yourselves from those things and give yourselves to God. So, let's look to Jesus to know God. And that's what we're doing this morning as we take a look at Jesus Christ and what he reveals to us about his relationship with God the Father even before creation.

Because before anything was created, before God was ruling over everything outside of himself, he was living in a loving relationship as God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We're going to focus on just God the Father and Son this morning and next week bring in the Holy Spirit. together. So, God's word in Jesus reveals this to us.

God the Father, God the Son, living in this loving relationship. Jesus reveals to us God as Father. Even in his name, Son of God, he reveals that there is one who is Father.

2 Corinthians 1, 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 John 3, Grace, mercy, and peace be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son in truth and love.

[16:53] 1 John 5, 12, Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. So, Jesus' name, Son of God, reveals to us that God is first and foremost Father.

Now, initially I struggled with this chapter. Maybe it was the writer's writing style. You know how that is. Sometimes you read books that fit the way you think and everything goes smoothly and others write in such a way that you're trying to stay with their thinking.

And I read other reviews of the book and they were glowing reviews and I think, it's got to be me here. You know, I'm just not tracking here.

But as I stuck with it and kept going into the scriptures and different verses and seeing this emphasis of this relationship Father and Son before creation.

Now, I grew in a, this always seems like an understated way of saying this, appreciated God and who he was as father.

[18:04] But that's what we see here in Jesus, even in his title as son of God. So, Jesus' name, son of God, reveals to us, again, that God is first and foremost father.

Before creation, God was not some impersonal force, an uncaused cause. He wasn't existing alone, needing to create somebody in order to relate to that person or something to rule over. That would make him a needy God, in need of something outside of himself, in order to express further who he was. But he wasn't a needy God.

He was eternal God the Father, enjoying a familial relationship with the eternal God the Son. It's important that we recognize that that's something that was transpiring from throughout all eternity. When we use the term son or begotten, we think of a beginning point and need to be careful there. But God the Father didn't bring God the Son into existence.

[19:15] God the Son was not begotten in that sense. And there are some people that might come to your door and believe that and you've got to be careful. They say, no, we believe Jesus is God.

Well, did you always believe that he was God? Well, no, they don't believe that. But this is what we're seeing as revealed in God's reliable written revelation that we might know the truth about him. John 1, 1 through 3, verses again that we started with, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God. He was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

And then verse 14 again, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So the Word, being the Son, Jesus, was God in the beginning. The beginning, not their beginning, but the beginning of the world.

[20:24] He was already there existing as God the Father, God the Son. He was not made or generated by the Father in the sense that he the Son had a beginning.

It was God the Son that made all things. So if all things were made by him, he was not made by someone else. He was always there existing with the Father.

God the Son is different from what we normally think of begetting. Now this is something else. You can discuss this more in your small group or study this more.

You can go to great lengths on this topic. But this begetting of the Son from the Father is an eternal begetting. Quote, the Father is never without the Son, but like a lamp.

It is the very nature of the Father to shine out his Son. And likewise, it is the very nature of the Son to be the one who shines out from his Father.

[21:27] The Son has his very being from the Father, not being in the sense that it was started, but as the Father exists eternally, so the Son exists eternally.

They're not separated. In fact, he, Jesus, is the going out, the radiance of the Father's own being. he is the Son. So as long as God the Father existed, God the Son existed as the radiance of his glory.

Both are essential. You won't find one without the other. As the one has always been, the other has always been. Both were essential, an eternal God in relationship, as God the Father and God the Son.

So why is that important to us? Isn't that the question you asked, Scott? Why is that important to us? Where's Scott? I was just, look, there he is over here. How come you're sitting over there?

[22:28] You used to sit over here. Well, as God, Jesus is the sufficient sacrifice for sinners. If he was anything less than true God, he could not be offered as a sufficient sacrifice for sin.

The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Colossians 1, 19 and 20, for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.

You see how those two are connected, deity of Jesus Christ, making peace through the blood of his cross. Hebrews 1, 3, he's the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. So the deity of Jesus Christ and his sufficient sacrifice go together.

A quote by John Piper saying similar, those go together. You can't have one without the other. If the fullness of deity isn't there, reconciliation by the blood of this being isn't there.

[23 : 41] So it's through his sufficient sacrifice that Jesus the Son brings repentant sinners to the Father. Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Now this verse took on some special meaning too as I started thinking more of this relationship, this father-son relationship and the value of it, the glory of it.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, the repentant sinner is joined to Jesus and Jesus brings that person to enjoy life knowing God, living in relationship with him.

What Jesus, God the Son, has enjoyed with God the Father from eternity, he wants others to enjoy. I mean, to me, that's where my understanding was starting to grow a little bit more and to enjoy this relationship.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes unto the Father through me. He didn't say no one comes up unto this beautiful heaven, this beautiful place with angels and where there's no more tears, no more crying.

[24 : 55] All those things are beautiful, but what was primary was Jesus now can bring people unto the Father. the most important thing, I hate using the word thing because it seems so general, aspect of Godness was their relationship, what they were enjoying in this relationship as Father and Son.

There's nothing greater that Jesus could bring us unto than this relationship that he's experiencing with the Father. So if we're making eternal life something other than this, really we're missing the greater worth, the greater treasure.

And so that's at times I think to myself in praying that, God help me to know you. Aren't there times in your Christian walk that you think, man I just don't know him the way I'm seeing these writers write about him.

And I want to know him in that way since that is what is highly treasured by God the Son. If that's what he's bringing repentant people to, this treasure of being in relationship with the Father.

They had something special. Jesus, and we see in God's word this use of familial terms when speaking about their relationship.

[26 : 32] But it goes beyond their relationship and it really is expressed in God's relationship with those who are his people. So again, you see that which God highly values is that kind of relationship.

The relationship that he's experiencing with his son, he's bringing to the humanity and offering this invitation for them to come and enjoy this relationship.

Look at the many verses that show this. Israel is called my firstborn son. In Exodus 4.22, he carries his people as a father carries his son, Deuteronomy 1.

He disciplines them as a man disciplines his son, Deuteronomy 8. He shows compassion to them as a father shows compassion to his children. And Jesus directed us to pray to our father in heaven.

Paul greets the Thessalonian believers with grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. So who he is in and of himself before creation is an important as that carries over in the relationships with those who are his people after creation.

[27 : 55] That's what God wants us to know about himself and not just, well I should say know in the sense of enjoy and enter into that which existed before creation which the son, father and son enjoyed together that was so special that Jesus prayed that let's get back to that, what I had from the beginning.

He's inviting us to come into and enjoy. This is a special treasure that we are invited to be part of and to know in a special way as God's chosen people.

not everyone gets to enjoy this treasure. We can enjoy this treasure. We can enjoy it now while we're waiting for the fullness of it to come.

That's a great, great privilege that we have. Knowing God as father. But let's move beyond just the fact that he's father. Jesus reveals him as loving father.

father. Now that's interesting too. That's important. John 17 24. Father, I desire that they also whom you've given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

[29 : 25] So, the glory that you've given me, not given in the sense that he didn't have it at one time in the past, but given in the sense that that which comes from the father to the son.

It's a radiance, it's a glory that the father has that comes through the son. He's always been the radiance of the father. And it's that which the son glories in and it's something that delights the father and it's what he loves doing through the son.

So, this relationship is so beautiful and highly esteemed that Jesus, by Jesus, that Jesus prays to the father that those whom the father has given him would be able to see this beautiful, reciprocal, glorious, loving relationship.

It was something that they enjoyed that was given because there was this love from the father to the son. This is what they were dwelling in and what they were doing prior to creation.

It was not like they were missing out on something and had, as I said earlier, to create something, create some people or some other things to enjoy and do. They had ultimate and complete satisfaction in this relationship, this familial relationship as it's described to us as father and son, living in love with each other.

[30 : 57] Another quote by Michael Reeves, before he ever created, before he ever ruled the world, before anything else, this God was a father loving his son.

And of course, they're in this love relationship because God is love. As God the father, he was loving God the son before creation and this is the truth of who God is.

This is the one Jesus is bringing repentant sinners to know. God, this God, is unique. And we know him through the revelation that he's provided in his word and in the revelation of his son, Jesus Christ, being son to a father, being son to a father to a loving father.

It's important for us to get our understanding of this father from his word because there's times that people have difficulty understanding this father relationship because maybe they have not had much of an earthly father's.

While we're supposed to, as fathers, reflect what's consistent with the heavenly father, in many instances it doesn't happen. Right, man? There's times that I certainly haven't reflected what is true of the heavenly father in my fathering relationships with my children.

[32 : 30] But that doesn't mean people should pull away from God the father because what maybe I have manifested incorrectly about him.

father. So we need to turn to the faithful and true revelations of God the father, what we learn from his word and what is revealed in God the son so that we can truly enjoy him in truth and who he is. Just because we have imperfect earthly fathers doesn't mean we can't enjoy a great full relationship with our heavenly father.

He is true to who he is and revealed in the word of God and will never stray from who he is. We can delight in the Trinity because God is love and manifests that love in their relationships.

John 3.35 the father loves the son and has given all things into his hand. For the father loves the son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And then John 14 Jesus said but I do as the father has commanded me so that the world might know that I love the father.

[33 : 42] So there we see that familiar loving relationship between the father and the son. In their relationship we see this reciprocating love. God the father loves God the son.

And the father is the loving head. And he sends and directs the son and the son receives the father's love and responds in love by going and doing the father's will.

There's really no inequality in this relationship. Again once we start describing God as sending the son and the son submitting the father we start thinking of inequality.

People think well the woman she has the wife has to submit to her husband. I won't be doing that.

You won't catch me doing that. They don't understand that it has nothing to do with equality here.

It's just a matter of function and service. Working together. Husband and wife working together. And so it is with father and son. Both equal in deity.

[34 : 46] Michael Reeve writes the shape of the father son relationship the head ship begins a gracious cascade. Like a waterfall of love as the father is the lover and the head of the son.

So the son goes out to be the lover and the head of the church. As the father has loved me so have I loved you the son says. And therein lies the very goodness of the gospel.

As the father is the lover and the son is the beloved so Christ becomes the lover of the church and the church his beloved. That means that Christ loves the church first and foremost. His love is not a response given only when the church loves him. His love comes first and we only love him because he first loved us. Such is the spreading goodness that rolls out of the very being of this God.

This is the God that we're learning about. This is the God that dwells from eternity past as a triune God. A God that we can delight in. This is the God that he wants us to know.

[35 : 57] This personal God who has worked in such a way as to bring repentant sinners into relationship with himself and with his son to know and enjoy.

So let's glorify God and enjoy him together. How can we enjoy him? We can enjoy him as father as we understand that as father he loves me.

As father he gives me good and wise counsel. As God father he's working everything out for my good. And on and on we could go throughout the scriptures and see that well understanding him as father I want to interact with him as father and it glorifies him for me to respond to him in that way as my father.

Because that is a glorious position of who he is as God father. But we can glorify the son in the sense that I can respond to the father as the son has responded to the father.

And I can glorify the son and God the father by making it my goal to please him. By receiving his counsel from me.

[37 : 29] Remember Jesus said I only speak those those words that the father has given me to speak. So I receive his counsel as from a loving heavenly father and speak that.

In fact I make it my my goal my meat what is essential for my everyday life to do the will of the father even if it means cost to me because I know my father would never ask me to do something that would not be for his glory in my welfare.

This is the God that that we've entered relationship and I trust you have entered that relationship with him and are beginning to know more of him.

I mean we all long for relationships. You think of the different things whether it's on TV or at work and what people talk about. They're usually talking a lot about relationships.

Relationships with their boss, relationships with their wife, with their children and on and on and going. Many times you can listen to them you can hear them longing for meaningful relationship.

[38 : 43] Many times that's elusive because they've ignored the number one relationship where we can know relationships and enjoy relationships with other people.

Trust God and his counsel and who he is. The revelation about himself received this revelation and to come to him and enjoy that relationship that we can enjoy with him more and enjoy relationships with other people as well.

Let's pray. Father, this morning we give thanks for your written revelation and for Jesus Christ coming into the world revealing to us even more about himself, yourself as God.

We still need to grow more and more, Father, in understanding this and we make it our prayer that your Holy Spirit would do that in our hearts, that we would go from here with a greater love, appreciation for who you are as God in that relationship that you have as God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And that, Father, we would see that and love you more because of who you are. Grow us in our understanding. In Jesus' name we pray.

[40 : 08] Amen. Thank you. Next week we'll bring the Holy Spirit into this. Amen.