

10/20-26 #30 **The Church in the Triune God: I. The Triune God is the structure of the New Testament. II. We come to know the Triune God by experiencing Him and enjoying Him: A** The Triune God is not merely the object of our faith; He is dwelling in us as our life and life supply for our experience and enjoyment. 1 John 4:13 In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, that He has given to us of His Spirit. 14 And we have beheld and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. **B** We need to know the Triune God experientially through the inner enjoyment of the subjective God. **C** If we would know the Triune God, we must be in the line of life and in the process of the growth in life; the more we grow in life, the more we will be concerned with the Divine Trinity. **III. When the Triune God becomes our experience and enjoyment, He is not only the One on the throne who is universally vast, but He is also the One in our heart:** 1 John 3:19 And in this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will persuade our heart before Him, 20 because if our heart blames us, it is because God is greater than our heart and knows all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart does not blame us, we have boldness toward God. **A** We know the Triune God not in the vastness of the universe but in the personal realm of our heart. **B** The concern of the New Testament is that we know the Triune God who has come to dwell in our being—the One who dwells in our spirit and desires to spread into all the inward parts of our heart. **C** The New Testament way for us to know the Triune God is personal, detailed, and experiential. **D** How precious is this experiential way of knowing the Triune God! **IV. The New Testament, like the Bible as a whole, is fully composed of and structured with the Divine Trinity: A** The entire New Testament is related to the Triune God; the Triune God is the element for the construction of the New Testament. **B** The Bible presents us a picture of the move of the Divine Trinity for the accomplishment of His economy. **C** The Bible was written according to the governing principle of the Triune God wrought into His chosen and redeemed people as their enjoyment, their drink, and their fountain of life and light. **D** The revelation concerning the Triune God in the Word of God is for the dispensing of God in His Divine Trinity into His chosen and redeemed people for their experience and enjoyment so that they might become

His corporate expression for eternity. **V. The Epistle of 1 Thessalonians is addressed to "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ":** 1Thes.1:1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. **A** On the one hand, the church in Thessalonica was of the Thessalonians; on the other hand, this church was in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Such a church is born of God the Father with His life and nature and is organically united with the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He is and has done. John1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, 13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. **2** We need to see that the church is composed of human beings who are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have the life of God and who are in the organic union with Christ. 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. **B** When Paul speaks of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, he actually means that the church is in the Triune God: 1Cor.1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, *who is* theirs and ours: 1 The expressions God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ both imply the Spirit; therefore, in 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood, and we may speak of the church being in the Triune God. **2** Because the three of the Divine Trinity are inseparable, whenever we have the first, the Father, we also have the second, the Son, and the third, the Spirit. **3** The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, not three; They are distinct but not separate. **a** We cannot separate the Son from the Father, or the Father and the Son from the Spirit, because all three coexist and coinhere. John14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe because of the works themselves. **b** In Their eternal coexistence the three of the Godhead are distinct, but Their eternal coinherence makes Them one. **4** In the divine economy the three of the Divine Trinity work and are manifested

respectively in three consecutive stages: **a** The Father is the One who plans, originates, and initiates. Eph.1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, **4** Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world ···, **5** Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ ···, **b** The Son accomplishes everything that the Father has planned, originated, and initiated. **7** In whom we have redemption through His blood, ··· **c** The Spirit executes and applies what the Father has planned and what the Son has accomplished. **13**... in Him also believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise, **d** Selection is of the Father, deliverance is of the Son, and imparting, or propagating, is of the Spirit. **5** When the Son comes, He comes with the Father and by the Spirit; the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit comes as the Son with the Father. **c** For the church to be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ means that the church is in the processed Triune God: **1** According to the Bible, there is no such thing as the church being merely in God; rather, the church is in the processed Triune God. **2** In Genesis 1 God was the unprocessed God, but in the New Testament He has become the processed Triune God. **3** Processed refers to the crucial steps through which the Triune God has passed in the divine economy: incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection: **a** In crucifixion the Lord accomplished redemption, the termination of the old creation, and the destruction of Satan and death. **b** In resurrection He germinated the new creation. **c** Now He is the life-giving Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the processed Triune God. **4** The church in the processed Triune God is the church in the One who has become the life-giving Spirit with the Father and the Son : **a** The processed Triune God reaches us, contacts us, and is applied to us in our experience as the life-giving Spirit. **b** The Father is in the Son, and the Son is now the life-giving Spirit dwelling in us. **c** When we are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, we are in the Spirit; thus, we are the church in the processed Triune God. **d** If we see the vision of the church in the Triune God, this vision will control our thinking, our activities, and our entire life. **Testimony** The church in Kobe, on the

one hand, belongs to the people in Kobe; on the other hand, it is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a church has been born of the Father and possesses His life and nature. If we see the vision of the church in the Triune God, this vision will govern our entire thought, activity, and living. Prov.29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint;" Brother Lee gave many messages on 1 Thessalonians 1:1. When I read them, I was both amazed and deeply nourished. At the same time, with fear and trembling, I asked myself, ***"Do I have such a vision when I practice the church life?"*** Then I was enlightened to realize that the vision I had was not adequate. I confessed my sin to the Lord, saying, ***"Lord Jesus, my vision is not sufficient. As a result, I have not been living a church life according to the vision. Please forgive me. Grant me the spirit of wisdom and revelation, and show me clearly the heavenly vision concerning the church."*** After such prayer, I began to listen carefully to the fellowship of the brothers and sisters in the church life. I considered their words and prayed, ***"Although they appear to be ordinary people, they are joined to the Triune God. They are part of the wonderful church. I need to understand, consider, and pray over their words."*** I also began to pay careful attention to and pray over the speaking of the co-worker brothers in conferences and trainings. The vision concerning the church advanced greatly as I learned to heed the speaking of the Holy Spirit through the brothers and sisters who serve with me and through the co-workers. A recent example is from a conference held in mid-September. There, I heard the burden and fellowship from the co-workers concerning the vision and commission of shepherding. That very evening after returning to Kobe, I fellowshiped with the responsible brothers and announced it the next day in the prayer meeting. Immediately, the whole church renewed the practice of shepherding. As a result, the attendance on the Lord's Day, which had not exceeded 200 before, surpassed 200 for four consecutive weeks afterward. I can testify that the vision concerning the church now governs and uplifts my entire thinking and service, producing remaining fruit.