

Well, thank you so much. What a great privilege to be here at First Presbyterian Columbia again and for this lecture series. And I have so looked forward to being with you. I'm going to remove these because I'm a Baptist. I will knock them off. I have to tell you that I was thrown a bit this morning by your pastor in a particular expression he used which gave me a moment of pause. He was thankfully and graciously praying for the upcoming meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. I was all ears. Much appreciated. Our meeting begins next week and with his particular enunciation, he said that the convention will be dealing with several naughty issues. I was thrown off a moment thinking, what does he think we're... Oh, naughty. Actually, it could be either one, but in any event, that's the way it works. Maybe any number of naughty issues. That's a part of the predicament of biblical Christianity in a very difficult age. We are thrown by this society many naughty issues in both senses, with the N and with the K. And a part of our task as Christians is to try to figure these things out, reason according to scripture, and then live faithfully in obedience to God. And there's a tendency these days, I know, that when Christians gather together for something like this lectureship, it very often turns, and understandably so, to questions of how Christians can be faithful in such complex, challenging times. So when I knew I was coming back and received the invitation and was thrilled to be coming, I was particularly pleased to see that the theme that you have taken this summer is explicitly doctrinal and is addressed to a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit, which means a deeper understanding of the Holy Trinity, which means a deeper understanding of the one true and living God. And so all these things fit into proper proportion, but it is a great honor to get to think together with you and to look to God's Word together as we think about better understanding the Holy Spirit. Now, a part of me looked at the title that was assigned, the third person, last but by no means least, and I understand exactly what's implied. But I want to begin by saying that a part of what we have to do in thinking about the Holy Spirit is realize that One of the most basic realities

of Christian theology is revealed in scripture. One of the most foundational issues in terms of speaking rightly of God is to speak carefully about the fact that there never has been a time when God did not exist. And there never has been a time when God did not exist as one God in three persons. And so the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal. But in terms of our understanding in the sequence, for example, of the church's understanding of God the Father and God the Son, Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit, three in one, it is true that in the historic experience of the church, the Holy Spirit really came necessarily in definition, theological and more comprehensive understanding, after the understandings of God the Father and of God the Son. And as we're going to

see, as

we kind of conclude in terms of historical theology, it's understandable given the experience of the church. So as you think about the theological experience of the Christian church and systematic and historical theologies in my academic field for decades, I was drawn to it because I wanted to understand, not just systematically, but historically, how is it that the Christian church came to understand how rightly to define and to defend, to declare the truth once for all delivered

to the saints. And so just in terms of historic sequence, it's important to understand that the urgency of the church was preaching Christ. The urgency of the early church was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the questions that were raised were largely, incessantly Christological questions. And so the early theological crises of the church had a great deal to do with how rightly to confess, rightly to understand, rightly to define, rightly to worship Jesus Christ the Son. And you can understand that coming out of the monotheistic background of of Israel with all the promises of the divine Son. Again, this is one God in three persons. The church's understanding began with trying to understand, most importantly, the relationship between the first and second persons of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son. And so as you arrive at the theological confusions and debates and controversies of the early church, as we will remember at the conclusion, The first big issue we often think of came down to the Council of Nicaea in 325 when the church learned that it must say that Jesus Christ is of the same substance as the Father and is to be worshipped as of the same substance as the Father. A presbyter named Arius in Alexandria had used the word homoousios rather than homoousios. You can recognize homo as in homogenized milk. It's the same substance. Homo meant similar. And you know, the church had to hear similar and say, that's not just a different word, that's heresy. And the Council of Nicaea declared that. And as we're gonna see in the conclusion, it is still a generation later in 381 that the church confesses in a very clear way its understanding of the Trinity and how the Holy Spirit fits within that understanding. And so we also have to understand in terms of biblical theology that if all we had is the Old Testament, we would not be talking about the Holy Spirit. It's not that the Holy Spirit isn't there. It's that the Holy Spirit is not named the Holy Spirit in this sense. The name and the description, such as the helper, as we see in the heart of the Gospel of John and the teaching of Jesus, he is not so named in the Old Testament. But we do understand that he is there. We understand the Holy Spirit is there. And so having received the new covenant revelation and being taught by Christ and the apostles, We're in a different situation than Israel ever was in understanding the Holy Spirit. For instance, the Apostle Paul in just one epistle refers to the Holy Spirit more than the entire Old Testament. That's just in one epistle. Now,

that's not to say that, again, the Holy Spirit is absent. As a matter of fact, we can now look backwards at the Old Testament and come to understand the Holy Spirit's presence and the agency of the Holy Spirit, the assigned work of the Holy Spirit, even as the Scripture begins in creation. It's the Spirit of God that is so active in creation. It's the Spirit of God who is shaping and forming, and so the Father works through the Son, who is the divine Logos, through whom all things are created, and yet we understand that creation's a Trinitarian act. We didn't know that from Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 in any formalized sense. It takes John 1, for example,

In the Logos Christology of John 1, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him. Okay, now everything falls together.

We have Genesis 1 and we have John 1. And we are also similarly able to look from the New Testament back to the Old Testament and we see the Holy Spirit in creation. And it's not just that we see the Holy Spirit in creation, we see the Spirit of God in terms of the explanation in the Old Testament of the presence of God in the cosmos. And so it's God's Spirit that is present within the created order, divine action, divine sovereignty, credited to the Spirit. The prophetic gift very clearly tied to the presence of the Spirit and to the Spirit's anointing and to being filled with the Spirit and in the Spirit. And so all these things make

sense to us looking backwards. And that's one of the reasons why we as Christians do biblical theology the way we do it. It's with the understanding of a succession of covenants. Yes, it's with the major understanding of promise and fulfillment. And so what we see in the Old Testament is promise, and it turns out that the promises were even richer than Israel understood. And the presence of the Holy Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit also. Even in the Old Testament you have such notions as anointing, and of course you have The Holy Spirit credited with being the one who, in the prophetic gift, offers the prophetic utterance. And that's why we come to understand that the gift of Scripture itself is given to us by Scripture. It's God-breathed. It's the Holy Spirit working on, the old confessions put it right, men of old moved by the Holy Spirit. That's the explanation for the inspiration of Scripture. And of course, in the New Testament, the work of the Holy Spirit is so comprehensive that, I know this is the first lecture among many, and that's good. Because there will be others who will be able to explicate the different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. But we are believers only because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Not just in a general sense, but specifically in us. The only way we heard the gospel is because the Holy Spirit opened our ears that we would hear. Worked in our hearts to call us to Christ. The only reason we're Christians now is because he binds us to Christ. Even now, the Holy Spirit

is the one who authorizes and the one who energizes the preaching of the Word of God. He inspired the Word in its very beginning. He has given life to the Word. He enlivens Christian preaching in such a way that biblical preaching is the utterance of the Word of God that is driven by, carried by the Holy Spirit. eyes are opened illumination comes by the Holy Spirit work in the heart in terms of sanctification comes by the Holy Spirit the fellowship of the church is in the bond of Christ, held in the unity of the Holy Spirit. And again, we come to Scripture, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit, in order to have our hearts and minds conformed to the image of Christ, as we are conformed to His image. And again, we would say, by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was evident in the performance of miracles and signs and in the giving of gifts. This is where the reformers got it right when they said that the main thing we need to be watchful of and aware of and so unspeakably thankful for is the fact that the ordinary gifts that Christ has given to the church are those upon which we depend. Lord's Day by Lord's Day, in the preaching of the Word of God, in the fellowship of the saints, in the spirit-enlivened worship. So all this is just a reminder of the fact that when we talk about the Christian faith, we cannot talk about the Christian faith in virtually every paragraph speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit. But we don't always, in every paragraph, speak of the work of the Holy Spirit. which is one of the good and healthy reasons why you are taking this summer for this series. But I also want to put it in a different perspective and that is to say that one of the most important things we can know biblically about the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit's work is not to draw attention to himself but rather to draw attention to Christ. and to draw attention to the Father. So drawing attention to the Father and to the Son is the declared work of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. And so even as the Scriptures reveal Christ, even as every word of Scripture testifies to the glory of God, and that means the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit is the quiet member of the Trinity in terms of being spoken of, but we need to be very careful about that because the Holy Spirit is a very loud member of the Trinity when it comes to speaking to us the word of God. The other reason why I think it's very important that we have this kind of consideration is because it's interesting to know that there have been relatively few moments of deep theological controversy over the Holy Spirit in the history of the Christian church. And for that, I think we should be thankful. But there have been moments of controversy. And interestingly enough, many of us in our own lifespans kind of represent a good deal of that period of controversy because of the rise of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements and other kinds of movements that arose in Europe and even now are very much arising kind of by the moment in places like

Africa. where the Christian church is having to think again, okay, how do we get this exactly right? And what is the work of the Spirit according to the Holy Scriptures? And how do we understand the claims being made by some about tongues and prophecy and other things? So we find ourselves talking about things that I think, you know, you go back 200 years in church history, people would be amazed we'd be having this conversation. But it's a symptom of the age. It's one of the reasons why we need to consider biblically and carefully, the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Now, in order to do that, just in thinking about being with you, I thought, you know, maybe the most important thing we could do is to look to, I think, the clearest passage in which Christ speaks of the giving of the Spirit. And so, if you have your scriptures, I want to invite you to turn to the Gospel of John, and we're going to look together at Christ declaring what it means that the Holy Spirit, the helper, will come. And you know, when you speak of Christ, Let's just think about this for a moment. We cannot speak of Christ. We cannot speak of the person and work of Christ. We can't speak of the birth of Christ. We can't speak of the conception of Christ without speaking about the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is the one who came upon the Virgin Mary. And so the virgin birth is often called the virgin conception of Jesus. The child was conceived within her by the Holy Spirit. So again, the unity of, of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the unity of their purpose and work, absolutely necessary. You know, here in John, in the very heart of the gospel, it's important canonically for us to recognize that when we get to John 14, 15, and 16, When we get to the high priestly prayer of John chapter 17, Jesus is clearly preparing his followers for his crucifixion and his resurrection and his ascension to the Father. And so we look at these passages and we understand that this is in essence, by the Holy Spirit, John gives us this gospel And in these chapters we have material that's absolutely necessary for the church's understanding of the gospel. It's also absolutely necessary for our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. And it's also clear that even at the time that Jesus spoke these words, many of these believers and his followers did not understand what he was saying. And in one sense we know they did not understand what he was saying even as he described his crucifixion. It's only in retrospect that many of them remembered what he had said about the promise of his resurrection. Jesus tells them that a time is coming when he is not going to be with them. Now that had to be the most terrifying thing that these early believers could have heard. Just understand the predicament. They're being told by Jesus that there will come a time when he is not with them. And so in the background of what instinctively would have been sheer terror. Hear how the Lord speaks of these things, and in particular, let's look at chapter 14. And let's look at verse 15. If

you love me, you will keep  
my commandments. Verse 16. And I will ask the  
Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you  
forever. even the spirit of truth, whom  
the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows  
him. You know him, for he dwells with  
you and will be with you. Listen to what he says in verse  
18. And let's try to hear this in the context, reminding ourselves,  
this is Jesus speaking to his followers as the opposition is  
intensifying around him and as he is headed for the cross. He  
speaks to them saying, I will not leave you as orphans. I will  
come to you. Yet in a little while, and the  
world will see me no more, but you will see me, because I live,  
you also will live. In that day, you will know that  
I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Just for the sake of time, look  
down at verse 25. These things I have spoken to  
you while I am still with you, but the Helper, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all  
things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.  
Peace I leave with you, my peace I leave with you, not as the  
world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled,  
neither let them be afraid. Go on to chapter 15. You'll recall that in verse 18,  
Jesus says that the world hates you, know that it has hated me  
before it hated you. If you were of the world, the  
world would love you as its own, but because you are not of the  
world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world  
hates you. And look at verse 26, but when the Helper comes,  
whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth,  
who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.  
And you also will bear witness because you have been with me  
from the beginning. Later in the same chapter, listen  
to what Jesus says in verse seven. The words are so shocking. Nevertheless,  
I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go  
away, the  
Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him  
to you, and when he comes, I will convict the world concerning  
sin and righteousness and judgment. Concerning sin, because they  
do not believe in me. Concerning righteousness, because I go to  
the Father. And you will see me no longer. Concerning judgment,  
because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many  
things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the  
Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,  
for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he  
hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things  
that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will  
take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father  
has is mine, therefore I said that he will take what is mine.  
and declare it to you. Then look at the next sentence,  
verse 16, a little while and you will see me no longer, and  
a little while and you will see me. This is one of these amazing

passages. We look back at it and I have to admit I feel a lot of sympathy for the disciples and the followers of Jesus who were gathered. I want to admit that we should all confess that we understand these things, even as revealed in these chapters, only because, in effect, we are reading them backwards from our knowledge of the crucifixion and the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are living this out temporally. And can you imagine the horror of Jesus telling them, I'm going to leave you? There's going to come a time when you don't see me, then you're going to see me, but then I'm leaving. And of course, he speaks of his ascension and his return to the Father. What amazing language that Jesus says to them, I will not leave you as orphans. Isn't that sweet? It would also be terrifying, right? I will not leave you as orphans. I mean, they had followed Jesus. He said, come follow me. They

left everything and followed him. Jesus had spoken consistently and progressively about his work and in particular about the cross that was to come. Even in this passage, again, he makes very clear if the world hated me it's going to hate you and remember when it hates you it hated me first so Jesus is telling his disciples here in this briefing as he's on the way to Calvary he's telling them the world's gonna hate you and I'm going to leave you I just don't want us to pause and pass over that without recognizing the sheer terror that must have represented for the followers. As a matter of fact, I went on reading just a little bit just in order to remind us that John helps us to understand they did not understand. They did not understand either what Jesus was saying specifically about the crucifixion and the resurrection, and they certainly didn't understand specifically and in detail what he's saying about the helper. But we're in a different situation.

We are speaking in the year 2024, the year of the Lord, and the church has had two millennia of experience preaching the word of God and seeking to understand these issues through various twists and turns and moments of theological definition, moments of theological controversy, and sometimes moments of white hot debate in the church. The question is, what do we rightly believe, and what do we rightly teach about the Holy Spirit, and how does this inform the Christian life? And there are so many texts in Scripture to which we could turn. I mentioned the Apostle Paul, and just even the notion in the epistles of how the church is to worship in the Spirit, about how the Spirit enlivens the Word of God, and having given us the gift of the Word of God, accompanies the preaching of the Word of God, and brings increase to the preaching of the Word of God, binds Christians together in the fellowship of the saints. There's so much of that yet to come. I want us just this morning, as you get started in this series, to look at the passage here that we find. in John chapter 14 through 16,

and understand five things that Jesus said that the Holy Spirit, the helper, will do, okay? Five things. First, as you look at chapter 14, verse 26, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all I have said to you. Isn't that sweet? So even though Jesus says I'm not gonna be with you The father will send the helper. And then later in the same passage, Jesus will say, I will send the helper. And when the helper comes. He will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I said to you. Isn't that sweet? You know what? Jesus here is basically saying to the church, I know you don't understand a lot of this right now. I know even as I'm speaking to you, you don't understand a lot of this right now. But when I am no longer with you and I am with the Father and the Father sends the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things. So here's something we need to recognize as you even get started in this series. What is the relevance of the Holy Spirit to the Christian life? Well, number one, there would be no Christian gospel but for the work of the Holy Spirit. There would be no knowledge of the gospel but for the gift of the Holy Spirit in the scripture. There would be no Christians but for the quickening and the regeneration that is brought about by the Holy Spirit. And the church would be absolutely atomized and confused, but for the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. And what the Holy Spirit is doing is teaching us all things. And then to the disciples, bringing to remembrance all I said to you. Okay, couple of questions here. Whenever we see something like that, how does the Holy Spirit bring to remembrance all that Christ has said to us? Okay, two ways, just think about it. First, in the scripture itself, which is by the Holy Spirit, the inspiration of the human authors, again, moved by the Holy Spirit. The second thing is, is that the Holy Spirit did not inspire the Word only to abandon the scripture He applies the word to our hearts even now. He opens our eyes that we see, opens our ears that we hear, loosens the preacher's tongue so that he may preach. and accompanies the Word. The Holy Spirit is never separated from the Word. The Holy Spirit accompanies the Word, bringing to remembrance. That's what we do in Christian preaching, right? That's what we do in Christian worship. We're bringing constantly to remembrance all that Christ said to the Church. And we would be completely incompetent of doing that, and we would even be completely incompetent of knowing we are completely incompetent of doing that. but for the Holy Spirit. So that's the first thing. He will teach you all things. So even as Jesus taught the church, and of Christ we are taught, and Christ is our Savior and Lord, the Lord himself said that it would be to the advantage of the church. that the Holy Spirit be the one who teaches us all things. Now just ask yourself a question,



just a question very quickly. How could that possibly be to the advantage of the church? And then this helps us to understand the distinction between the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity and the universal presence in the church of the third person of the Trinity in such a way that those who heard Jesus teach in the first century were those who were proximate to hear Jesus teach. Others had the secondary effect of being told what Jesus said, but aren't you thankful that we have the Holy Spirit-inspired scriptures whereby we know exactly what we are to know concerning what Jesus did and what Jesus said? And again, not as even just a dead word, but as a living word. The second thing we see here in John 14:15 and 16 is what we find, not in 14:26, but in chapter 15:26, he will bear witness about me. Jesus said to his disciples here, he said, you also will bear witness. So very interesting. So the Holy Spirit bears witness of Christ. And this is again, at least a twofold thing. It's probably multifold in ways that we don't even have time to really think about, but at least in terms of the Holy Spirit's witness, again, scripture is primary because this is the primary means whereby the Holy Spirit witnesses of Christ, but there's also the internal witness, what the Christian Church has learned to call the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. So it's one thing with the ears to hear the Word of God, to hear the Scriptures, to hear the witness of Christ, it's another thing to hear. And the Holy Spirit is actually assigned here the work of delivering the scriptures to us and then opening our eyes, opening our ears, opening our hearts that we might receive it. But you'll notice there's another part to this. Again, he will bear witness about me, the helper, and you also will bear witness. So that's very, very important for us to know. It's not just that we are the recipients of this witness, we are ourselves witnesses. And by the way, in our witnessing, where is the power of the gospel? It is in the fact that the Holy Spirit accompanies and empowers the Christian witness. So we hope to be persuasive with people who do not know Christ about the gospel. We hope to be agents of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. We hope to be agents of leading persons to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But here's the bad news, we are completely incompetent at that task. The Holy Spirit is eternally, sovereignly, omnipotently capable of that task. He uses human agents. You will also bear witness of me. But it's the Holy Spirit who's going to be the compelling witness, even in our witness. The Holy Spirit's the compelling witness in the Scripture's witness. The third thing that we find here is in chapter 16, verse 8. He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. All right, so there are a lot of different kinds of preachers in this world. And I was reading John Wesley actually referring to some of them. He said there are flutterers, there are yellors,

there are  
whisperers. That would be a particularly  
difficult thing for me. Mary says that basically I fill a lot of conversations with,

would you say that again? The older I get, the more I say  
it. I think the older I get, the  
less I hear. Yeah, there are all kinds of  
preachers, yellers, stompers, you take it. But you know, the  
compelling power of the preacher, of the sermon, is the scripture  
as mediated by the Holy Spirit. That's really all there is. And  
you know what? I don't care how good you think  
you are or how powerful you are or how manipulative the preacher  
may try to be. The fact is, you can't manipulate  
the human heart. We cannot bring about conviction concerning sin and  
righteousness and judgment. I think a human preacher can  
scare people, but a human preacher cannot convict of sin. Only the  
Holy Spirit can do that. The Holy Spirit does that. That's  
how we become believers. So we're all as believers in  
the Lord Jesus Christ, giving testimony to the fact that we  
were convicted of our sin by the Holy Spirit. And Jesus said  
that it is the Holy Spirit's work. And so it's just a good  
reminder to us that we are to preach the word in season and  
out of season. We're to share the gospel. We're to tell people  
the good news. But we can convict no one of  
sin. Only the Holy Spirit can do that, and the Holy Spirit  
does. So stop. yell, whisper, you're not going  
to convict anyone of sin. You do have to speak the gospel.  
You do have to preach the word. You do have to bear the witness.  
But the effective nature of that witness is due solely to the  
sovereign power of the Holy Spirit, who honors the gospel by convicting  
of sin. and righteousness and judgment.  
The fourth thing we need to recognize is found in chapter 16, verse  
13. He will guide you into all truth. And this is so very important.  
I think we recognize that one of the greatest dangers of the  
Christian church is that we would be self-directed in our learning.  
Is that not horrifying? And I see this. This is what  
liberal Christianity is. This is liberal theology. It's  
self-directed theological extrapolation. And that just ends up an absolute  
theological disaster because no one wanders his way into the  
riches of Christian orthodoxy. You wander your way out of biblical  
orthodoxy into some various form of heterodoxy and heteropraxy. And that's writ  
large across  
the church. The security of the church, the believing church,  
the gospel church, the scripture church, is that the Holy Spirit  
guides us into all truth. This is not a self-guided study.  
This is a Holy Spirit-guided study. It's a Holy Spirit-guided  
study because, first of all, we are given the curriculum.  
This is one of the most interesting things I try to say to entering  
students at the seminary. You just need to understand,  
the school has a curriculum. We have to have a curriculum.

But the church's curriculum is the word of God. And so, if you leave here without that curriculum, none of the rest of the curriculum matters. The church's curriculum is the Word of God and it's the Holy Spirit who gives us the Word of God. It's the Holy Spirit who ministers through the Word of God and works within the church to guide us into all truth. And let's just confess our dependence upon the Holy Spirit's work in that respect. Because without the Holy Spirit, we would wander, we would frankly drive the car off the cliff. The next thing I just want to mention, the fifth thing that Jesus says is in chapter 16 verse 15, he will glorify me for he will take what is mine and deliver it to you. How sweet is that? Okay, so this is new, this is new. Here as Jesus is speaking to his disciples, even as he's on the brink of speaking to the Father in the intimacy of the high priestly prayer in chapter 17, even as he knows where he is headed, he says to his followers, he, the helper, will glorify me. Okay, so don't pass over that too quickly. This is in the Gospel of John, a very important text. It's a turning point because Jesus is now talking about the church glorifying Him, but it's only able to do so and knows how to do so and is empowered to do so because the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son. For He will take what is mine and declare it to you. This is something interesting about the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. We do not quote the Holy Spirit. We quote Jesus. We quote the scripture. We can quote the words of the Father as given to us in scripture. We do not quote the Holy Spirit in this sense because it's the Holy Spirit's work to glorify the Son and the Son's work to glorify the Father. In such a way that he will glorify me, Jesus said, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. Now all right, all right, time is fleeting. There are a few things the systematic theologian has to say quickly because there's certain things that have to be said or we're going to leave with the possibility of some dangerous confusion. We need to admit to one another that one of the greatest temptations to the Christian church is to fall into some kind of tritheism. And it's because the math is admittedly difficult. One God in three persons. But the church has learned how to say it, and that's exactly the way the church has learned to say it. One God in three persons. And one of the ways we avoid

Trinitarian heresy and misunderstanding are a couple of a couple of issues that are very important. Number one, we're talking about three co-equal, co-eternal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are talking about the Son who's begotten by the Father, but the Holy Spirit's involved in the beginning. and we're talking about the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, and then even in the same passage, proceeding from the Son. This is a part, as some of you will know, this is one of the great turning points in church history. Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in 381 declared

many of these things, but it wasn't until the 11th century that the church made very clear that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son. This led to the breach between Eastern and Western Christianity. what's called the Filioque clause, which means that also from the sun. And so Eastern churches or the Eastern Orthodox churches do not confess that the Spirit proceeds and from the sun. Some will say and through the sun, but not and from the sun. My purpose is not to go back to the 11th century. I have a matter of minutes. But to say, It is really important that the church is learning over time how best to bear witness of the Holy Spirit. I think it should be something of a comfort to us to know that the church has had to think and think carefully and even in the 11th century say, not because it was a new thing, but it just needed to be codified. No, we really do need to say this because it's right here in the text. Two other things, perichoresis. This is a Greek word, don't worry about it. It's interpenetration of the three members of the Trinity. So it means that we have to be very careful about making the distinguishing characteristics, but we are not talking about a divine committee of three. We are talking about one being in three persons. The other issue is, I've spoken of the work of the Holy Spirit, and we speak of the work of Christ, and we can rightly speak of the work of the Father, but we need to have the theological category, and this is, you get some academic credit for this. You need the theological category of inseparable operations. And so it's very important we recognize that we never speak of the Father acting apart from the Son or the Spirit. We never speak of the Spirit working apart from the Father and the Son. We never speak of the Son working apart from the Father and of the Spirit, because they're all working together. Scripture makes very clear an assignment of a work, but the work is not exclusive. the work is shared in ways that, frankly, are beyond our knowledge and our ability and our imagination, so don't try to unpack it. Confess it because Scripture teaches it. It has been a joy to think through these things with you. I just want to, hold on just a moment. The Southern Baptist is never over. I just want to tell you, even as it's been a joy to be with you, I just want to say four things from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in 381. Just understand that this is what the church says it believes. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, that's the first thing, the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, to who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Three, who is worshipped together with the Father and the Son. Four, and who spoke things through the prophets. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, is worshipped together with the Father and the Son. Isn't that glorious? And he spoke through the prophets, therefore, we're able to speak of him. To God be the glory,

great things  
he has done. Amen, God bless you, thank you.