

# Life and Meaning in the Triune God

Acts 2:14a, 22-36

**Focus:** Through the Triune God's plan, work, and benefit, you have life and meaning

**Function:** That my hearers speak about the Trinity in terms of what the Triune God has done for them.

**Law:** Our plans, works, and benefits are rendered meaningless by sin and death.

**Gospel:** Through the Triune God's plan, work, and benefit, you have life and meaning.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

1. As I was preparing my sermon for this Sunday, I was reminded of a video. Perhaps some of you are familiar with it. It's called St. Patrick's Bad Analogies. If you have heard it, there are some lines that are probably stick out for you. For example, St. Patrick tries to explain the Trinity to them by saying it's like how water can exist in three different states. The solid: ice. The liquid and the vapor. "That's modalism Patrick! Modalism states that God is not revealed in three distinct persons but merely takes on three different forms. Later, St. Patrick tries to say, "The Trinity's like a three-leaf clover." "You're about to confess partialism. Partialism says that the three persons aren't fully God but are each a part or one-

third of God.” Now, that video is pretty funny. But I’ve also found that it makes people scared to talk about God as he really is. Cause they think they’re about to commit some heresy. In reality, the purpose of those analogies is just to think about ways that God can be three in one. **At the same time, we recognize those analogies will fall short of describing God as he really is.**

2. However, analogies about God go really far if you’re just trying to talk about how God works in the world. **So here’s an analogy for you to try. Say that there’s something you want to do. How do you get it done?** First, you come up with a plan. Second, you do the work. And third, you benefit from that work. So for example, say there’s a way you wanted your life to play out. So first, you make a plan. Finish high school. Go to college. Get a good degree. Good job. Find a wife. Have a family. And live happily ever after. Then you do the work. Countless hours of homework, classroom study, planning your finances. Actually spending the hours at work. Finding out how to raise kids. And then the benefit. The sense of joy and accomplishment once you’ve finally graduated high school or college or gotten your first job. The excitement of meeting and spending time with the love of your life. Or the joys of seeing your kids. That’s what it looks like when you or I get something done.

3. (Transition) And, it works in a similar way for our Triune God. **God has his own plan, work, and benefit to give you and me eternal life.** And you can be certain that God’s plan, work, and benefit will succeed.

4. That's different for you or me. **We often find that our plans, our works, our benefits don't work out the way we want them too.** Let's take our previous example. First, comes the plan. Maybe you didn't think things through. And now you're stuck with a debt that you can't pay off. Now you're stuck with a huge course load. Now you're stuck in a job that doesn't fit you. Now you're working through things you should've talked about before getting married. But, let's say you had a good plan. Then comes the work. The unexpected happens. Your work – school or otherwise – is too much. You suddenly get fired from your job. Your relationship with your significant other is draining. But let's say your plan and your work line up. Lastly, you've got the benefit. Maybe you've finished college or high school. But you struggle to get a job with your hard-earned degree. Maybe you've got your dream job. But the work becomes a burden that you hate. Maybe you've got your relationship with your wife. But you hardly get to see her around. And even if your plan, work, and benefit work out, it's still going to be cut short. By death.

5. But when it comes to God, His plan, work, and benefit succeed. He has given you and me eternal life. God created humanity and put them in the Garden of Eden. God was with them to give them eternal life. But man foolishly ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Sin and death entered in, while God himself was no longer with man to give him eternal life. **So, how was man going to get eternal life back?** Here's how Peter lays it out in our text. God the Father had a plan. He knew we human beings couldn't help ourselves. So, He sent His Son Jesus. Jesus then did the work. He made God dwell in us through his incarnation and baptism. Jesus redeemed us from sin, death, and the devil on the cross.

Lastly, God makes His work benefit us. He sends His Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution. In this way, you have eternal life. From the plan of the Father, through the work of the Son, and in the benefit of the Holy Spirit.

6. **We await the future day of the resurrection.** Right now, we struggle with our plans, work, and benefits. They get messed up because of sin and death. But in the resurrection, our plans, works, and benefits will line up with God's. And for that reason, we know that we will succeed. And so, for now, we pray that God would the work of our hands. That even though our plans, work, and benefits fail because of sin and death, God would graciously cause what we do in this life to have lasting meaning – beyond what you or I could comprehend.

7. Of course, what've been using this whole time is an analogy. With every aspect of God's plan, work, and benefit, all three persons are involved. But there are so many more ways to talk about God's plan, work, and benefit beyond what I've listed here. This is just one way to stress how important the Trinity is. In terms of who God is, the Trinity is beyond all understanding. In terms of how God works, we know that the Triune God has given you and me eternal life.

Now, may the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.