

# Perichoresis

**God's astounding plan is to draw human beings into his life and share his love**

## **Introduction: Why Perichoresis?**

For centuries the Christian church has accepted God as a Trinity, 'One God, Three Persons,' an enclosed relationship of mutual and reciprocal love. It still accepts that Father, Son and Holy Spirit co-exist in one another as One Being.

Around the fourth century, as the church's understanding of the Triune God grew, the word **Perichoresis** was used. It derives from the Greek 'chora,' meaning space or room, or from 'chorein,' meaning to contain. It indicates a sort of "mutual containing," or co-indwelling, a relationship of sharing so open, free, honest and real that the persons involved actually dwell in one another. There is perfect union without any loss of personal identity. As Kruger aptly wrote, "When one weeps the other tastes the salt." It's a relationship that removes all fear - there is no fear in love - and it creates a freedom so vulnerable that it enables each to be fully known and to fully know.

Only the Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy this relationship, but God's purpose in creating humans is to draw us into and to share in this life of love and light, which God actually is. His purpose is not for us to *be* God (as some erroneously teach) because God is uncreated and divine while we are created and human, but in Jesus Christ divinity and humanity exist in perfect harmony and unison. And since Christ is in God, we who are "in Christ" are already drawn into this relationship. We can experience a foretaste of the Father's ultimate purpose, but as Paul states, "the whole creation waits in expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God." There's a waiting period first. The consummation of this relationship comes about later, when *all* things will be made new.

## **The New Creation has already begun**

One day, all things will be made new. But, putting together **2 Corinthians 5:17**, **Galatians 2:20** and **Colossians 3:1-4**, we also discover that we already are a new creation. "We are crucified with Christ, we died, and our (real) life is now hidden with him in God." So while as yet we do not *see* this life, this new creation, because it is hidden and invisible to all but God, it is nevertheless a present absolute reality.

For most of our time we remain blissfully unaware of the new creation, which is our new and real life in God, because we're too caught up in this old crucified life to think much about it. In contrast, God's whole being is passionately focused on this new creation, the new humanity in Christ - Christ being the firstfruits (**John 13:36**).

This new humanity, of which we are part, is not a "makeover," it's a brand new creation, a new birth, "born of the Spirit," and "created in Christ Jesus." It is perfect, sinless and totally reconciled to God (**1 John 3:8-11**).

In Christ Jesus the divine nature and human nature exist in perfect harmony and unison. Jesus, as this newly created humanity, ascended to the throne of the Father and now sits in his presence. And being God himself, and therefore *in* God in the relationship of Perichoresis of the Trinity, Jesus now takes this new humanity - which is "in Christ" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) - into the circle of the Triune relationship, which God *is*. That's the astounding plan of God.

But that's the nature of God, as summarized in **2 Corinthians 13:14**. "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." It's the "love" of God the Father that leads him to share his life of love and perfect fellowship, and his love that led him to create other free-living beings with

whom he would form a relationship of perfect love. It's the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" that conveys this to us, and the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" that works with us to conform us to what we *already are* – a new, perfect human being with Christ in God.

And what is our part? We simply allow God to do his work in us. Or, as Paul writes: "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus."

But how?

### **Putting on the new self**

Paul explains how in **Colossians 3:1-4**. First, in the New King James version:

"Since, then, you have been *raised* with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, *for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God*. When Christ, who *is* your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

And now The Message version:

"So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, *act* like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ - that's where the action is. See things from his perspective. Your old life is dead. Your new life, which is your *real* life - even though invisible to spectators - is with Christ in God. *He* is your life. When Christ (your real life, remember) shows up again on this earth, you'll show up too - the real you, the glorious you."

The "how" is to simply keep our minds and sights on what God is doing, and what his purpose is for us. As Paul continues in **verses 9-10** (NKJ), "you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

We are constantly "being renewed in knowledge" - the true knowledge of what God has done *for* and *with* us in Christ Jesus, that we are being restored to the image of our Creator - the original image that was distorted and disfigured by sin. This is the present work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And this is what is being renewed in our minds, constantly - that the Spirit will achieve the ultimate purpose of the Father and bring us to the point where the final transformation from what we are now on earth to what we are now in Christ takes place "in the twinkling of an eye," described in **1 Corinthians 15:49-54**.

### **Conclusion**

It matters little that we cannot understand *how* God will bring about this astonishing feat; we merely have to trust him to do so.

He has promised it; we simply allow the Holy Spirit to complete his work in us. Meanwhile we rest in Christ, in God, in perfect assurance and security, knowing that God the Holy Spirit will finish his work, just as God the Son finished his - and all in perfect unison with the Father's purpose.