



Introducing Our Faith
The Living God

Week 2



Overview of this week

❖ The Relational God

- The monotheism of the Jews
- Mysteries confront the first Christians
- What does scripture say?
- A new understanding of God
 - The unity and “threeness” of God
 - God as a loving community
- Key distortions and affirmations



The Shema

- ❖ The prayers of the boy, Jesus
 - Spoken morning and evening
 - A “battle cry” of oppressed Israel
- ❖ Deuteronomy 6:4 (possible translations) see Mark 12:29
 - Literally – Hear you Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one
 - *Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*
 - *The Lord our God is one Lord*
 - *The Lord our God, the Lord is one*
 - *The Lord is our God, the Lord is one*
- ❖ Psalm 96:4-5, 10



A New Understanding of God



- One God in three persons
- God has always known himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- God is inherently relational!! God is a community of three!!



Three key distortions

- ❖ Collapse the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit into one
 - modalism is an example -- where God appeared first as the Father, then as the Son, then as the Spirit
- ❖ Trying to “rank” the Father, the Son, and the Spirit – particularly, making the Son less than the Father
 - Differing roles – Father sends the Son; but not a ranking
 - Was there a time when the Son was not? Is the Son of the same substance as the Father?
 - Arius and the Council of Nicea
- ❖ Focusing too much on one person of the Trinity



Three Key Affirmations (from Migliore)

- ❖ The eternal life of God is personal life in relationship
 - God IS love (1 John 4:16b) – this makes sense only because of God’s inherent relationality
 - God’s identity is personal relationship
- ❖ God exists in community
 - Yes . . . God has a social life! -- the three persons of God “indwell” each other
 - God creates a people to live in relationship with him
- ❖ The life of God is essentially self-giving love
 - The compassion of God – stronger than sin and death!

What does this say about us – we who are made in God’s image?