

## Trinity Sunday

Readings: Gen 1:1 – 2:4a, Mat 28:16 – 20

Recently someone said to me “Susan you ask us a lot of questions. Don’t you know we are too old for those questions?” This person was having me on in the nicest possible way. So I have listened.

Today I will be very kind and give you a simple task rather than ask a question. It’s a very easy task. Listen carefully –

Your task is to explain, in one sentence using words of one syllable or less, the Holy Trinity. Easy huh!

Some don’t want an explanation; they are happy to live with the mystery. But if you are a T, a thinker, on the Myer’s Briggs’ personality scale, you will prefer to understand exactly how God works together. So here is a simple explanation:

The Bible says there is only one God. It also says Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14); it says the Father is God (Phil. 1:2); and it says the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). They are three separate persons but one God; one God who exists in three persons. Each person is God, yet each person is a separate person. Each person has specific roles though they overlap. Those roles are clarified in the Creed which we will declare together soon.

So that’s all clear then? We can move on. 😊

Maybe not. I don’t really understand the depths of Trinity. Others might. But our logical comprehension is not the only aspect of our faith. It is important, yes. Knowledge aids our faith. Faith is also based on the character and power of God, not on our own understanding. Faith is based on relationship; relationship freely offered by our loving God.

We see God's desire for relationship throughout Scripture - beginning with the creation story in the garden and ending with the reconciliation of all things in the City where God rules. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth from nothing. Just how God created is not clear. Arguments continue.

God spoke and light burst forth into glorious day, the sky was formed, the boundaries for ocean and land were set, luxurious plant life bore fruit, the sun, moon, stars lit up the sky, the waters teemed with life, land produced a vast array of living creatures and finally God created humanity in his own image. Humanity was created for relationship – with God and with each other. All of creation relates to each other, holds together. If one part of creation is damaged, it impacts the whole. That is why Christians ought to be concerned about and involved with earth care in some way or other.

It is very clear is that the three persons of God were intimately involved in creation. We see that God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit work in a creative way together.

God spoke; through Jesus, the living Word. By the power of the Word these things were brought into being. And the Spirit was active, hovering over the waters. The Message says "God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss." It reminds me of a hen hatching her eggs. One God, three persons, working creatively together; enjoying one another's company; enjoying the task at hand.

Though I am a T on the scale, I am okay with mysterious nature of the Trinity. Much about our Lord is mysterious. Perhaps the greatest mystery of all is why God, complete in God-self, would create humans for relationship. God had the perfect relationship within the Trinity. Why spoil a good thing?

But create us he did. Come near to us in the form of Jesus Christ he did. Leave us with the Holy Spirit, when Christ returned to be with the Father, he

did. God is not a god far away, but a God who is so close to us and intimately involved in the detail of our lives.

Bonhoeffer, from a sermon which he preached on the Trinity, in 1934 said:

*"The more we come to know this God, the more mysterious he becomes for us. It is not the God who is furthest away from us who is the biggest mystery, but rather the God who is nearest us in the Spirit of Jesus Christ."*

It is a spectacular mystery why this amazing God would love me, and you, and all of creation. But his love is so great; so wonderful; so awe-inspiring. The Spirit of Jesus Christ is near us.

Today we've stepped aside from Mark's Gospel to celebrate Trinity Sunday. Let's turn now to the Great Commission from Matthew. I'm sure many of you could recite verses 28:19 and 20 by heart.

The verses are common sermon topics. Church leaders urge us to go and make disciples as if it were another thing to do. We must do this extra thing on top of our already busy lives if we want to be good Christians. Is that so?

We must look at the context of Scripture. Jesus is giving his final instructions to his followers. He has been resurrected from the dead and is now speaking to them before he leaves the earth and sends the Spirit to them. Jesus asks them to meet him on a mountain.

Mountains are important in Scripture. Moses and Elijah met the living God on a mountain. In Matthew's Gospel, the Sermon happens on the Mount, the transfiguration, the final address on the Mount of Olives, and now this final parting scene.

So this is an important message. But is it meant to be as heavy as we often take it to be? Did you know the original Greek carries the sense of "As you are going, be making disciples..."

Disciple-making is to be part of our daily lives not some additional, onerous extra.

Let's backtrack a bit first. What is a disciple? Simply a follower. As we are going about our daily lives, we ourselves are followers and we are to be introducing others to the one we follow and helping shape them into his image. – . A follower becomes like the one they follow.

So what does that mean? Think about your parents for a moment. I look like my Dad. I share some personality characteristics with him too. He has passed away now but he was very laid back. It took a lot to get him angry but when he did, he could sure dig his heels in. I can be very stubborn too if backed into a corner. My Dad was very accepting and could see the good in everyone and I pray that the Lord would make me more like that too.

The clearest mark of a Jesus follower is that of love. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples," Jesus said, if what? "... if you love one another. John 13:34-35

Brennan Manning puts it like this: "*Jesus said you are to love one another as I have loved you, a love that will possibly lead to the bloody, anguish gift of yourself, a love that forgives seven times seven, that keeps no record of wrong. This is the criterion, sole norm, the standard of discipleship in the New Israel of God.*" <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Furious Longing of God

So disciples grow into the likeness of our Father God. We reveal that likeness in very different ways:

*...God made all varieties of people with a wide variety of interests and abilities. He has called people of every race and colour who have been hurt by life in every manner imaginable. Even the scars of past abuse and injury can be the means of bringing healing to another. What wonderful opportunities to make disciples!"* Charles R. Swindoll

Our Trinitarian God has made us all different. We all relate to different people because we are so different. And we are all wounded. The hard stuff of life has impacted us as, just it had the disciples. We have scars. Jesus said we are to be making disciples as we are going along. It's part of our daily lives, not some special task for the evangelist or pastor among us. As we are making disciples we are also becoming closer followers of the Living God ourselves.

Jesus commands that his followers be baptised. And he tells us to be baptised in the name of our Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity has been at work in them up to this point. God the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit will continue to work in their lives just as he does ours.

Baptism is the outward sign of commitment to following Jesus. (Sometimes parent decide on behalf of their child and sometimes we are old enough to decide ourselves). In baptism God the Holy Trinity does something mysterious something supernatural. An essential part of baptism is that we become a part of God's own family.

A solitary Christian is the exception, not the norm. Flawed, frustrating, fickle though members of the Body can be, our Lord still wants us to be a Body. God calls us to be part of his life and part of each other's' lives.

His body is to be unified. It is to be loving. Others will know we are his disciples if we love one another. We can only do this because God loves through us. Disciple-making is only possible because we serve the Triune God.

Trinity Sunday is about acknowledging and worshipping the three persons of our One God. Today we affirm and praise God for the way he has worked in and through this Church; through Holy Trinity Church in this community.

The Trinitarian God is a community. We are growing in his image and so we are community too. I want to invite you to take the opportunity to recommit yourself to being at one with your God and at one with his Body here (or wherever you come from).

Let's take a moment to pray silently. You might like to give thanks to God for who he is and what he means to you. You might like to ask him two questions:

1. What is he saying to you?
2. What are you meant to do about it?

*I encourage you to write down what he says if you have a pen with you.*

*Let's pray in silence:*

Let's pray together the prayer of the day:

Father, we praise you, for you created all things through your Word and Holy Spirit. You reveal your plan to save all of creation through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. You bless us with your life and love through your Holy Spirit. Fill us with your vision that we may serve and praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen