

Reflection – Trinity Sunday
04/06/2023
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Exodus 34: 1-8	New Stone Tablets, From a Compassionate God
Song of the Three 29-34	Blessed is God
2 Corinthians 13: 11-13	Live in Peace, The Grace
Matthew 28: 16-20	The Great Commission

Introduction

This morning as we celebrate Trinity Sunday I would like us to think about 2 things – Communication and Relationships. I once heard someone say that you only really start to know someone once you've shared a meal with them. And what happens when we share a meal with someone? Well hopefully we will talk with them and communication will occur. This will in turn develop the relationship between us both.

Trinity – Communicated to us

We can communicate with God through prayer and how we live our lives. God communicates with us through any number of methods, primarily through the person Jesus, followed by the Holy Spirit, but also others such as scripture, experiences and those around us. It is through this communication and relationship with God that we as mere humans have come to develop the doctrine of the Trinity. Let's have a brief look at each of the Three Persons:-

The Father

From the earliest of times people were aware of the fatherliness of God, and this is very evident in profound stories like those of Adam and Eve and Noah, for example.

The Holy Spirit

As the Old Testament unfolds the experience of the people of God, we find that having become acquainted with the Father, we then find ourselves through the Prophets becoming aware of the Spirit of God the Holy Spirit. This is very evident in their experiences when they were required to speak God's Word. They often described this experience as one in which the Spirit of God came upon them. The Spirit was the person who inspired them to speak God's Word. Then in the New Testament we see the Holy Spirit comes to all the believers at Pentecost.

The Son

In this revelation of God a common theme right through it from the very beginning was His Word to humankind. He spoke to Adam and Eve, not to mention Noah and the Patriarchs, and through His Prophets and Lawgivers He continues to speak to His people. The great classical example and revelation of His Word was that given to Moses on Mount Sinai during the Exodus experience. It was this Word of God that St. John was profound enough to see as the manifestation of the Son of God in the Old Testament, who became a person in Jesus Christ and St. John describes Him as “The Word made Flesh”. By the time we move through the Old Testament until the New, we are becoming well acquainted with the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is how they put it as the first article of religion in 1562 – Of Faith in the Trinity. “There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker, and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be 3 persons, of one substance, power and eternity; The Father, The Son and the Holy Ghost.”

As Christians today we continue our faith in the Trinity as the way we understand God reveals himself to us. Interestingly the Bible itself does not mention the word Trinity, but it does obviously talk quite clearly about God the Father, God’s Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Trinity in Today’s Bible Readings

Let us look at how our relationship with God is revealed in the readings from the scripture this morning.

In the first reading from the book of Exodus we hear God communicating of Himself to Moses. It’s interesting we don’t hear of the Almighty God or the All Powerful God, but rather, the compassionate and gracious God. Clearly this describes God, as primarily, the God of Love. A God who cares for and wants the best for all of us. Each and every one of us. This isn’t to say that God isn’t almighty, or all powerful, but rather that God is primarily All Love, and longs for us to have a relationship with him based on Love.

The second reading this morning we hear, is the end of Pauls 2nd letter to the Corinthians. Paul urges them to live in Peace, so that God, who is the God of love and peace, will be with them. He concludes with what we know as the Grace, which includes all three persons of the Trinity. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.**

God the Father provides the Love. God the Son provides the Grace to give us access to it, and God the Holy Spirit provides the means by which we might enjoy such fellowship.

In Matthew's Gospel today we hear Jesus give the disciples the Great Commission. They are to make disciples of All Nations, and to baptise in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Again, whilst the word Trinity doesn't appear in the Bible, the theology is clearly based on Jesus's own words.

Trinity - Experienced

Early Christians came to know God as the Trinity, through their relationship with God, and how they found God to be, not because they wanted to make up a new doctrine. I remember as a child at religious instructions and in Sunday School, we were given analogies to try to understand how God could be 3 and yet only one: Some of these included:-Water, it could be a solid in the form of ice, a liquid in the form of water, or a gas in the form of steam. It had 3 different forms, but it was still water. Another example was the 3 leaf clover, it has 3 parts, but it is still one leaf. These examples can be useful, but as humans we cannot hope to fully explain the mystery of God. As Peter Carnley has said the image of 3 persons in one substance conjures up for him 3 distressed people struggling to remove themselves from a very sticky tub of tapioca pudding.

Our relationship with God must begin with Faith. Unless we begin with faith there is no room for the relationship to develop.

Trinity – Worshipped

And what does worshipping a God who is in perfect unity, although consisting of three persons, say to us about how we are to be as a worshipping community. I think our focus should be building a community where we all work together and yet acknowledge and embrace the differences among us. This is very easy to say, but of course not so easy to achieve. It requires continued effort from all members if we are to be a worshipping community and not just a community who gathers to worship.

Conclusion

So, in conclusion, as we continue to Worship and acknowledge God as Trinity, we will no doubt struggle with how it can be that 3 fit into one. This is for me a matter of faith rather than logic. God has revealed himself to us as the Trinity. It is up to us, as to how we reveal ourselves to the triune God, and continue to grow in our relationship with God, and our relationships with our fellow Christians, so that we might communicate the Good News of Jesus with those around us. Amen.