

The Trinity

Matthew 28:16-end

I don't know how many of you know my background, but I am one of those quirky people who enjoy maths and anything to do with numbers. Right from my school days and all through my working life I have been fascinated with numbers, hence my accounting and payroll background. I even like the Sudoku puzzles and puzzles like 24H in a D etc.

So it pleases me to find that numbers have a real significance in the Bible.
Think of 12 disciples representing the 12 tribes of Israel;
40 days and 40 nights Jesus spent in the desert;
7 days of creation etc.

But the number I am interested in today is the number 3. In the bible a lot of things are mentioned in threes.

Abraham had 3 special visitors

We hear of Shadrack, Meshack and Abednigo

Samuel was called 3 times from his bed

There were three gifts from the magi; gold frankincense and myrrh

Jesus rose on the third day; not the first or second

The cock crowed three times;

There were three crosses on Calvary.

There are many more instances I am sure you will recollect yourselves.

In our Eucharist today we will acclaim, Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again.

We pray Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.

The number three is significant.

It's also there in our daily lives.

When we shop we are offered small medium and large,

Buy 2 get 1 free,

Eat three good meals a day.

Think of past present and future, yesterday today and tomorrow, as children we learn our ABC,

Three Musketeers; Tom Dick and Harry; Ho Ho Ho says Santa; there were 3 wise monkeys; 3 Blind

mice; yes there are a lot of threes in our lives.

And God comes in threes. On this Trinity Sunday we celebrate the way our lives are blessed by the Father our Creator, the Son our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, who is with us now connecting us to God.

Three is a magic number as the saying goes.

The concept of the Trinity is like life and is complicated. The whole idea of God is bound up in three persons existing in a perpetual relationship, one with another, all with each other in love harmony and unity; - Three in one and one in three.

It is still a mystery in which we are assured that God is not only “up there” in heaven, but also “down here” with us right now and indeed is everywhere.

So how do we know that God is three?

In Genesis chi 1 v2we have “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the waters so we have the spirit and god mentioned in the first 2 verses of the Bible

V26 - God said “let us make people in our own image, to be like ourselves”. The words us, our and ourselves are plural; god is not alone.

And of course we have the New Testament where Jesus is revealed as the Son of God. And all this was prophesied by Isaiah.

I said it was complicated. Just listen to a true theologians explanation.

The Trinity is a Christian doctrine that defines one God existing in three distinct, simultaneous, co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial persons, Father Son and Holy Spirit. You are probably lost or switched off already. I know I was.

Did you know that the word trinity does not appear in the Bible? It comes from a Latin word Trinitas meaning three are one, and was first introduced by Tertullian in the 2nd century. The Trinity is based on the fact that God revealed himself in a threefold way,

1. 1) As Creator, Lord and Judge in the Old Testament.
2. 2) As the incarnated and resurrected Jesus Christ in the New Testament.
3. 3) As the Holy Spirit, who helps and intercedes for us.

The three persons of the Trinity are distinct in their relationship to each other, but they are identical in their essence and share one divine will and operation.

It might be that the Trinity remains a mystery to us. Many brave souls have attempted to explain it, comparing it to various things such as ice water steam, all the same elements yet each different; or an egg with its shell, white and yolk; or a shamrock leaf with its three parts. But nothing can really compare and it will probably remain an enigma for other people to illuminate upon. Personally I believe that some mysteries are best understood not in the light of logic, but in the truth of lives lived with trust in the incomprehensible goodness and love of our threefold God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Because to actually think we could fully understand the Trinity is to make the mistake that God is fully understandable... God is infinite. He is beyond our understanding. Believe or not the fact that God is too immense for our limited minds should be comforting rather than discouraging.

A quote from Isaiah : For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts your thoughts.

Today we have heard about the Great Commission that Jesus gave his disciples before he left them
Again there were three instructions

1, Go and make disciples of all nations – tell them of Jesus , talk about our faith. These things we can do today, the message is not just for those first disciples

2, Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Emphasising the Trinity, he asks us to encourage others in their faith journey.

3, Teach them to obey everything I have commanded.

The commandments were given us for good reason to pass on so we can all live a Holy Godly life.

Furthermore St Paul taught the Corinthian believers three things that they should do to live the right way together. He said -

1 Put things in order – make atonement put things right with God and each other

2 Agree with one another – we all worship the same God.

3 Live in Peace – peace with God, those around you and yourself.

And the God of love and peace will be with you

There are signs of the Trinity everywhere in our lives and in the world- if only we are believe.

If we accept rather than try to understand 3's we accept God

If we accept God we can accept our life is full of threes full of oddities, full of enigmas.

So to end this address I feel there is only one thing we can do and that is that we should say the Grace together. Please join in with me

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the love of God

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

Be with us all evermore. Amen.

Gill Gough