

Lyn Valley Mission Community

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 40:12-17. 27-31      Psalm 8      2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Matthew 28:16-20

In speaking and listening, may God be known, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

There used to be a bit of a joke among clergy that it was always good idea to invite a visiting preacher for Trinity Sunday. The wry humour here is about the apparent difficulty of explaining the Holy Trinity. When it comes down to it we are talking about the difficulty of explaining who God is! The problem, I suggest, lies not with "God" but with any idea that we can "explain God" rather than describing or experiencing God. It's a bit like the difference between describing or experiencing love, and trying to explain it. When Jesus tells his disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I don't think he primarily means that we have to explain the Trinity.

He is calling them to share what he has shown them of God so that others might be drawn towards following his way of living in the full knowledge of God's love that he has shown and come to be baptised into the love of the Godhead, the relationship of love we now call the Trinity.

The Trinity then, is not some theological problem made up to complicate faith, it is a way of finding expression for an experience, or the outcome of an inevitable need to find new language to describe what we know about God in the light of the revelation of Jesus.

When Jesus commissions his disciples he encouraging them to share what he had shown them about God.

What had he shown them?

He came alongside them in their worship of the Creator, the beyond all things being who is the origin of everything that exists and who holds it all in continuous existence. This is the God they already knew – who had called their ancestors into worship, who

had inspired the prophets and guided them through their history, who the psalmist praises and cries out to.

As they encountered Jesus himself - as he taught them with authority, as he worked miracles they began to believe what was revealed at wondrous moments: a voice at his baptism proclaiming him as God's Son, and again the encounter on a mountain top when he was transfigured, then the ultimate experience of watching him die, only for him to come to them again in a risen life to show them his eternal presence with them before ascending to the Godhead - in all this they recognised the immediate presence of the God they had only know as transcendent, beyond all things, before. And their response of worship could only be explained by describing this human fully human friend as fully divine, as God.

Once he was no longer physically present with them, they became open to a clear sense of the same divine presence within themselves, a spiritual presence in their hearts and sometimes recognised at work in the world, the presence of God.

Their whole understanding of God was deepened, broadened, widened, transformed.

This was the experience they shared in their preaching and in the love they extended in the name of Jesus and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to those around them - and when we read the Acts of the Apostles we see what an impact they had on those people - many, from all sort of backgrounds and ethnicities joining the earliest small group.

Over the next few hundred years as the church grew, the language of theology, such as the language of our creeds was found to try to put into words a description of these experiences that could be something of a shared language which tried to explain how these experiences were not about worshipping three Gods or a God with three parts, and it is this language that becomes more difficult.

We are talking about God - the being that, by definition, is not an object in our own world, God is beyond human concepts and comprehension, not something to be explained. Yet, the fundamental characteristic of this God we cannot explain is that

God chooses to draw us into encounter, into relationship, into the love that is God's self. God is love, love as relationship.

The love that is Lover, Beloved and the Love shared between, as St Augustine said.

God is love, the lover that seeks out to create a relationship for the good of the other, for the flourishing of the beloved and the growth of the love shared between.

God draws us into encounter in our creation – we come into being in God's love, for God to love us and for us to love God. God's love is the source of our being, the source of our existence.

We see the fulfilment of a human living in the clear knowledge of God's love in the life of Jesus, who shows us in concrete human ways the extent that God's love go for us – right into death itself to hold us eternally in God's loving presence.

We can feel the power of the love as the moving of the Spirit within and around us – when we know what it is to love, to wonder, to find strength and courage, to be deeply committed to big questions, to find new directions.

When Jesus tells his own disciples to make disciples of all nations, and to baptise in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I think he is encouraging them to help others find their way, through him, into this relationship of love which he shares with the Father and the Spirit.

What could be a greater joy and privilege than helping others find the love of their source, the love of a companion who comes to guide us into fullness of life, the love that is already deep in their hearts which they can bring to the world in their own unique way?

So, if you haven't noticed already, this priest finds it a great joy and privilege to preach on Trinity Sunday, to describe the God who is the creator of each one of us creating in love, who meets us in the love of Jesus to show us how to respond to and share love and who is the love in our hearts strengthens and inspires us to be those who love the world.

And even greater joy and privilege to suggest to you that in the coming week you take time to notice your own experiences of this God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and offer your own response to that presence.

May our blessing be the love of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen