

Trinity Sunday – AAA – Sunday 4th June 2023

Thanks Rob for that wonderful illustration of the 4 legged stool.

So, today is Trinity Sunday so we're talking about the Trinity – God in three person – Father Son and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons but the same God. Confusing or what!

Although the word Trinity does not appear in the Bible, there are many passages that support the idea throughout the Bible and particularly in the New Testament. The **lighting of our candles** at the beginning of our service and the **grace** that we say at the end of the service gives us an insight into the relationship between God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The word trinity comes from the Latin *trinitas*, which means 'three-ness'. In the early years of the church, they tried to pull together what the core, the essentials, of what Christians believed. Various councils of Bishops eventually settled on what we now call the Nicene creed – a version of which we will sing later in our service. We benefit from hundreds of years of people grappling with who our God is.

So, the creed, the Nicene creed, is our statement of faith. Our statement of what we believe.

And it is fundamentally Trinitarian and is accepted, and used, by a wide variety of churches; Anglican, Assyrian, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, Presbyterian, and many other protestant churches across the world. It's much wider than just a Church of England thing..

Here it is – this is what Christians believe

We believe in one God,

Not 3 Gods but one – Father Son & Holy Spirit – three parts of the same God, three expressions of the same God.

The creed goes on:

*the Father, the Almighty
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen. –*

So, God the Father is a creator God, and created heaven and earth, all we can see and things like angels that we usually can't see. So that's God the Father. Then it says

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.*

That's a long-winded way of saying, although Jesus **is** God's son – He was **always** God's son, right from the beginning of time. God didn't create him. There wasn't a Mrs God who had a son. And Jesus didn't just come into existence when he was born on earth 2000 yrs ago – he has always been with the father. He is of the same essence as the Father. *of one Being with the Father.*

And it goes on...

*Through him (through Christ) all things were made.
For us men (and women!) and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
and was made man.*

So Jesus came to save us – Jesus is our saviour. And Jesus, God the Son, became a human being. Finally, the creed goes on,

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.*

The Holy Spirit proceeds...he comes from – the father and the Son. Like Jesus, the Father did not make the Spirit, and neither did Jesus make the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is part of our Holy God, co-equal with the Father and the Son. And we worship the Holy Spirit in the same way we worship the Father and the Son...why? because he is God.

So, when we see the Spirit working in this place we say, 'Thank You God' (not thank you God while looking up to the Father) but thank you God the Spirit, here with us.

The Trinity, Father Son & Holy Spirit is a mystery, but they are all one God.

So, let's dig a little deeper,

God the Father, Creator of the universe, and he is the source of all love, mercy, and grace. He is Holy, brings hope, forgiveness, wisdom. He's a God of power and justice and peace.

These are just a few of the many characteristics of God the Father. He is a complex and multifaceted being, and it is impossible to fully capture his essence in a single list. However, these characteristics give us a glimpse into the heart and mind of God the Father,

and as we look at God the Son we can see many characteristics are the same – Why? Because he's the same God!!!

Jesus, the redeemer, saviour of the world – who came to bring us freedom from sin and death through repentance by his death on the cross. Jesus is full of...

Love, Grace, Mercy, Humility, Servanthood, Wisdom & Justice. And he brings us Hope & Peace that is beyond all understanding.

And see the Spirit has similar attributes

He brings Truth, Life, Peace, Joy, **Love**, Power, Hope & Wisdom at of course **GUIDANCE**. The Holy Spirit is a powerful and active force in the world. He animates us and brings His church to life. He is the source of all spiritual gifts, and he is the one who empowers believers to live holy lives and to share the gospel with others.

So, We often consider God the Father as the creator,
God the Son as our saviour and
God the Spirit as our guide.

Is this a helpful way of thinking about the Trinity? Yes I think it is. Helps us to frame things, when we're faced with difficult concepts.

But we can see from our lists that there is so much more and there is so much overlap in the fundamental qualities of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are all, all loving, all powerful and all knowing because they are one. Our God is one God in three persons and each person of the trinity **work together**, they don't act alone...

So, let's dig deeper- with an Orange question:

If God the Father is creator – where were Jesus and the Holy Spirit while he was busy creating the world?

So now we see it gets a bit more complex – because Jesus was there at the beginning, as was the Spirit, and all three were mentioned in the very first 3 verses of the Bible. Here's Genesis 1 v 1-3

1. In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth. – there's the Father.
2. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. There's the Holy Spirit in Verse 2
3. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. ...Where's Jesus in the third verse?

We need to turn to John 1 which echo's Genesis 1.:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and verse 14, the word became human and made his home among us. Jesus is God's word. When God spoke – that's Jesus at work!

We see God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all involved, all together, working in perfect harmony to create the world.

And that's the same for any time you think of God. If you look hard enough there will always be the Father, Son & Holy Spirit – they are always working together in love and fellowship.

When you pray – who do you pray to? Do you say, Dear God, or Heavenly Father, or Dear Jesus? Is the Spirit involved when we pray? Absolutely, One of the many The Church of England prayers begins. 'In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ. let us pray to the Father.'

Each one involved when we pray. You can't separate them.

The spirit searches us, and prays for us, if we don't know what to say, Jesus intercedes to the Father for us. The Father responds, by giving us what we need.

Ok, I think you're ready for some **red questions**...

1. Was there any time when Jesus was not part of the Trinity?

Jesus was separated from his Father when he died on the cross. For anyone who is bereaved, we know the pain of loss, the huge void it leaves within us. Can you imagine how God the Father was feeling having been with his Son from the beginning of time. Let's not get complacent and think, 'well he knew he was going to come back to life' so it didn't matter. No the pain of that separation was huge, physical for Jesus as he died on the cross and Spiritually for the Father as his Son was wrenched from him (remember the earthquake, the opening of the tombs, the tearing of the curtain) This was a huge sacrifice made by the son and the Father.

2. And last red question...Is Jesus still a human being? When Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection, was he still human?

Well, I believe so, his body was transformed, but he was recognisably human. There was no body left in the tomb and he didn't leave behind his body when he ascended into heaven.

So Trinity is complicated, God is beyond our understanding but it is good to grapple with the concepts, to have a deeper understanding of God in three persons.

At the end of today if you go away with frazzled brain then there's no better place to land back than that..

God is creator, saviour or redeemer, and guide

God the Father is a creator God

God the Son came to save us from our sin to live in eternity with God

God the Holy Spirit is our guide and the power within us that draws us into the Trinity of love

Because you see, we are an intricate part of the Trinity because God loves us so much he sent his son to die for us and because there is a human in heaven. We are a bit like Rob's 4th leg...

And if God is creator, redeemer, and guide, and we are caught up in this amazing Trinity, then we are called to engage in his work, to live in the world as co-creators, co-redeemers and co-guides? We are the hands and feet of God on earth today.

And so, I ask one final question. And this question is for you personally individually to ponder on.

This week, in what way are you going to engage in co-creating, - are you going to help Elizabeth with the Eco-project? Create something beautiful this week?

in what way are you going to engage in co-redeeming – leading someone towards Christ.

in what way are you going to engage in co-guiding – helping, supporting, encouraging others in their faith.

It's okay, you're not on your own, you're never on your own. The rest of the trinity will be with you. Jesus promises that he (and his Father and Holy Spirit) will be with you always to very end of the age.

Amen.