

## Trinity Sunday

Today's readings: Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31 and Psalm 8; Romans 5:1–5; John 16:12–15

I wonder if you've ever thought like this:

"God I can understand. Why complicate it by talk of a Trinity?"

Trinity is a word of course you'll never find in the Bible. But it is a word that very accurately describes the teaching of the Bible about God.

From beginning to end the Bible is clear about the beautiful nature of God as three persons and one God.

Let me say that again:

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From the Bible we know that God is not all wrapped up in himself, alone, unknowable or unconcerned. That describes the so-called gods of other religions.

No. Our God is Trinity; complete, knowable and loving.

That completeness in himself, that is, that he needs nothing, is seen most clearly in the loving fellowship between the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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Loving fellowship seen in the giving of the Father to the Son. Did you hear those words of Jesus just now?:

*“Everything that belongs to the Father is mine”* and he will go on to say: *“The Father has given all things into my hand”*

Loving fellowship seen in the submission by the Son to the Father’s plan; *“Your will, not mine, be done”* he says

Loving fellowship seen in the Holy Spirit showing the truth about Jesus to humans. In love the Spirit steps into the background and directs people to Jesus

The name for all this is of course – love.

Much more could be said about this, but our main aim today is not to be frightened by the big words or the complicated ideas.

Because it is a glorious thing to know this God, the One and Only God as he really is – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – three persons and One God.

To be at peace with God, to be full of joy in God even as we suffer.

To know hope that is real hope because we know it will never let us down.

Friends, we would have none of these things without God being Trinity – one God, three persons.

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Let me put it like another way:

God reveals himself as three Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This revealing of himself does not happen as a kind of impersonal message.

In our epistle reading today from the letter of St Paul to the Romans he puts it like this: “we have peace with God because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus we have received God’s grace. . .”

and a bit later: “God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us.”(Romans 5:1-5)

Or as the Lord Jesus Christ himself put it in our gospel reading from the gospel of John:

“Everything that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Holy Spirit will receive something from me and show it to you.”(John 16:15)

The truth that God is three persons yet one God is something we state each week in the creed. We would not say it unless we knew the creed gets it right in summarizing what the Bible clearly teaches.

And what the Bible teaches is this:

that God is one in the sense that the three persons share the same divine nature – they are all equally God from eternity to eternity – and that they share the same purpose.

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This is demonstrated both in the ways they love each other and the way they love us.

So it's very significant that in the way God the Father creates and loves us he demonstrates his nature as God the Father;

In the way God the Son loves us by submitting himself to the Father's plan, becoming a man and dying the death we all deserve for our refusal to completely love and obey God, he demonstrates his nature as God the Son;

And in the way the Holy Spirit is sent from the Father and the Son to lead us to Jesus and transform our character to be like that of Jesus he demonstrates his nature as God the Holy Spirit.

So the truth that we confess, and upon which we depend is not just a simple statement of the facts. It is that, and so much more.

It speaks of the most amazing and breathtaking acts of love;  
the most amazing and breathtaking graciousness;  
the most amazing and breathtaking reality that it is possible for us humans to know and be known by God himself.

God the Holy Trinity, the God of the Bible, the God of the creeds, the God we gather today to praise and pray to, to hear from and to remember, this is our God!

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His nature as Trinity, as Triune God, three persons and one God, was revealed when the Father sent his Son into the world, and when he sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. The Bible teaches and we confess gladly that God's Trinitarian *being* and his saving *actions* are two sides of the one coin.

If you remember the catechism, it puts it like this:

After being asked to recite the Apostles' Creed, we are asked the question: "What do you mainly learn from this creed?"

And this is how we learn to answer:

"First I learn to believe in God the Father, who has created me and all the world;

Secondly in God the Son who has redeemed me and all the human race;

Thirdly in God the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies me and all the elect people of God." (APBA page 815)

Trinity Sunday is a day to take stock and rejoice.

To ask ourselves the question: is God the Holy Trinity the God I know and trust – really? Or is he something less?

To read over the Creed and our Readings for today and to ask ourselves whether we have fully grasped all that our God is. Of course, all of us will find that we haven't!

But that shouldn't stop us from working at it. (After all, on the human level we keep working at knowing other people better – our spouse, our friends, our family, and so on. Same with God.)

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And we will find we rejoice more and more as we find out more and more about our God.