

THE TRINITY



NOTE: Our insights are important so remember to respect each other's thoughts/reflections.

DISCUSSION:

While we need to learn how to articulate the role and purposes of the Trinity (Father, Son and Spirit) as the bible shows us that this is how God wishes to be known, the words aren't as important as "how we build a relationship with each within the Trinity".

- In what ways do you build a relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit individually?
- What is one thing you could do this week that might help build a better connection or relationship with God *as Father – and as Son – and as Spirit?*

NOTE: The next few weeks will be about discussing the Christian Faith. This is a great opportunity to invite people around you to ask questions to you personally, come attend a LIFE group and/or watch the sermons online and send in questions. We begin with who Jesus claimed to be.

READ: Mark 1.16-28

- After reading just these few verses, how would you describe *who Jesus is?*

Jesus also seems to have authority over areas of life. Split up the following verses and share where he is shown to have authority as *a teacher, over death, over sickness, over nature, over evil spirits.*

- Mark 1.21-28, Matthew 7.29
- Mark 2.1-12, Matthew 8.1-19
- Mark 4.35-41, Matthew 8.23-27
- Mark 5.1-20, Matthew 8.28-34
- John 11

Extra question:

- What is an aspect of *who Jesus is* you feel "*less than confident*" in sharing with other people?

PRAYER:

Pray for any personal needs of your group, church, community, etc.

COMMUNAL PRAYER (optional)

Lord Jesus, give me a desire to know you more, draw me nearer to you and let me receive, know and share your grace and love with the world around me. Amen

TRINITY SUNDAY - John 3.1-17

In LIFE group this week we talked about who do we feel close to Father, Son and/or Spirit?

Some people felt just Jesus – others the Father and Jesus – others just the Spirit.

Then we discussed who we pray to? Again really different answers as some didn't know they could or possibly why to pray to either the Father, Son or Spirit – how about you?

I relate to God as Father, Son and Spirit in a few ways.

In my mind I approach God in a throne room – there's lots of other people - a sense of reverence like for royalty – but I'm not part of the crowd – *I'm known by God*

God is also a father figure of wisdom and comfort – who tells me – I'll never leave you!

Jesus is the one I sit on a park bench with – I talk and listen – sitting with a friend

As though sitting with one of the princes – *more relaxed than the queen* – feeling blessed to be with them - their important so you feel important – they choose to have time with you.

Then the Spirit – to me the Spirit is the One I chat to throughout the day - the voice of God interacting with me – highs and lows – the One who enables in me what I can't in myself.

It's the voice of God and of Jesus – yet it's also the One who is active to move in the world around me and in people.

So who do you feel closest to? Who do you pray to?

Did you know who to ask to for what or why it matters – or if it even does?

Nicodemus seeks something from Jesus – he wants to know the link between him and God

He's seeking to draw closer to God – we know this otherwise he'd write Jesus off like the other religious leaders did

Something in him is stirring – he sees tangible things Jesus says & does – miracles – things that transform people – he knows there's something more - but can't put his finger on it

So (vs 2) he points to what he thinks Jesus is about – but he misses the point

Like explaining the trinity – we point towards it as we *want* to understand this link - we're trying to draw closer to God

Maybe something in us stirs to know God – maybe the Bible just makes logical sense to us – maybe we've had – an experience – we feel there's more - we're trying to put a finger on it

Each Sunday we affirm God as Triune – some creeds go back to 300 AD

So we point as close as we can - to what God is and does – yet we may miss the point

So we're going to play a game today – *Help, I have a heretic in my church*

Who's used the image of water - 3 forms - ice, water and steam? *Congrats, you're a heretic*

This is modalism – it's trying to give the picture of God as three states or *modes* of substance but it can leave God as God at different times.

It doesn't reveal the *different ways* God remains connected *at the same time*.

Who's used the analogy - the Trinity is three independent divine beings - linked together by a cosmic glue – all the same sort of ethereal being.

You're fine – no actually you're a heretic.

This is Tritheism - it can leave the impression of '*three divine persons*' or personalities that might occupy the same space – but aren't one in the same. Mormons have this approach.

Who's explained the Trinity as Father is a *part of God*, so is the Son and so is the Holy Spirit – so together – *in unity* - they make up God! *Thanks for coming – you're also a heretic!*

This is Partialism - the idea that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are components of the one God – but each within the Trinity are only *become fully God* when they come together.

Then there's those who see Christ was born human and *adopted* by God at his resurrection (or baptism) and then he became part of the divine communion.

This is correct – no actually if you believed this you're also a heretic - this doesn't show how, even Jesus human form, also had a divine nature in communion with Father and Spirit

We'll excommunicate you later – baptism and excommunication – busy day at the office

Over the years this is what the church did – they argued and excommunicated people they thought had it wrong - one of the main issues was language

As I was talking with Dylan this week – we communicate with words meaningful to us – however these words might mean something completely different to someone else

Trying to talk to friends and family - maybe we've experienced something so we try to explain it – but it comes out all wrong

Maybe in the middle of an argument – we think we're saying one thing and the person takes it another way

The thing is while it's important how we articulate what we learn about the communion within Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God doesn't want us to get hung up definitions or words.

You see, the bible doesn't use the word trinity - but within the bible we see God revealed in a *Trinitarian way* - 1 John 5 unpacks this – and challenges us to respond.

Our reading today tells us the purpose of the Spirit is that it blows where it will - calling people to not be born of water (*flesh*) - but to be born from above (*spirit and baptism*).

This is what Aidan and Ursula did today – asked God to bring them new birth – *spiritually*

They felt something – a prompting to respond – not for others but for themselves.

Jesus tells Nicodemus that God's love is so great for the world - God offered up his Son – *that God had a son was a revelation* – and so was how God would offer up Jesus!

In the desert, serpents plagued the Israelites so the lord told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. When anyone was bitten and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

This is the role – purpose – of Jesus – in the same way people could look on the snake and live – when we look upon Jesus sacrifice and acknowledge him as Lord – we live

God didn't come to condemn us – he pursued us to offer eternal life – relationship with God as our father, Son and Holy Spirit – to be in relationship with all three

It's God who wants us to understand him in a Trinitarian way – so it's not about getting the right words as much as it's about getting the right relationship

So here's how drawing close – seeking God as Father, Son and Spirit helps us:

1. Although God is incomprehensible – talking about God as Trinity helps us share the role and purposes of each within the Trinity
2. While God can't be understood logically by us, God offers us a *spiritual experience* through the Trinity that enables us to know *we're pursued* by God.
3. It helps us articulate the perfect way God wishes to be understood – not for God's benefit – but to help us see that his perfection can flow through our imperfect lives
4. Show us that although God is different from us – God's divine character and nature forms the hope we rest in to know we have an eternal future.

The Trinity is a great reminder that God doesn't wait for us to understand him before pursuing us – he brings life - everyone can receive life in God like Aidan and Ursula did – all we have to do is simply look to Jesus – who was lifted high to save and heal us

It's why Jesus told his disciples to go - baptise everyone who believes - *or wants to believe* - in God - in the name of Father, Son and Spirit

If you want to have life in God today then, let me pray for us all - let's pray...