



Trinity Sunday

Sermon by Revd Sharmain James



12 June 2022

READINGS

Proverbs 8:1-4,22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Who God is.

Prayer: Triune God - light of the minds that know you, life of the souls that love you, and strength of the thoughts that seek you - bless the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts. Amen

Today we celebrate Trinity Sunday. Trinity Sunday is a special time in the church year when we pause and ponder the nature of God. We wonder about who God is whom we have glimpsed in Jesus, and who sent the Holy Spirit to be our guide. The word “Trinity” does not appear in the scriptures, neither the Old Testament, nor the New. But the hints are there. Jesus for example - says at the end of Matthew’s Gospel (28:19). - “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

In the story of Jesus’ life, the first time all three persons of the Trinity are represented in one scene is at Jesus’ baptism. Matthew, Mark, and Luke—describe a scene wherein, after John baptizes him, Jesus emerges from the water and he sees the Holy Spirit descending “like a dove” upon him. And a voice from heaven declares, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” The Apostle Paul writes in his second letter to the people of Corinth. (2 Corinthians 13:14). “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” And in the Old Testament, this spirit is present hovering over the waters when God created the earth and the heavens in the account told in Genesis.

But what does it mean that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons, one God? This is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian – and yet it is very difficult to believe that God can be three – yet one. All of the clever illustrations which we have heard over the years, they all fall short of explaining how logically God can be totally three and yet totally one. If we are honest it is something which is more clearly explained in terms of that great Christian word, mystery. . . . It is a mystery of our faith.

So - The Christian teaching about the Trinity is not meant to be an explanation of God – rather it is a way of describing what we know about God. One theologian, Alister McGrath, explores the idea that the Trinity is actually a “story”, a story about God. It is the story of God’s dealings with Israel and the church.” The Trinity affirms that God is active in the world and involved in the human story. And that God is made known by God’s actions. .

Today on this Trinity Sunday,- we are on a quest to find out the truth about God. In our quest to find out the truth about God, we find that God comes to us in: - in the Son, and in the Spirit. Jesus came to fully reveal God to the world. He taught that the God who created the vastness of the universe is also the

same God who is our personal heavenly Father, who knows our name and the numbers of hairs on our heads. We experience God through the stories about Jesus. In fact - Trinity Sunday, in a sense, combines all we have celebrated over the past months which have centered on God's mighty acts through Jesus:

Christmas-Epiphany celebrating God's taking flesh and dwelling among us in Jesus Christ. We know God through the death and resurrection of Jesus, by the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. God's love was fully alive in the life of Jesus. His teachings, his miracles, his way of life. God is revealed in Jesus, and our understanding of this revelation, our seeing God in Jesus, is enabled by the Holy Spirit. In other words - The Holy Spirit help points us to God.

Last Sunday, on the Day of Pentecost, we focused on the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. This theme continues today in our Gospel reading from the sixteenth chapter of John. In Chapter 16 the discourse of Jesus circles back one last time to the Holy Spirit, giving him the title "Spirit of Truth". Jesus said to his frightened disciples, "When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth." Truth, for us as for people in all times is considered a valuable commodity, more valuable than all earthly treasures like silver or gold.

Our legal system is based on the truth. In court, we swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We all want truth. The search for truth is deep within the human spirit. Deep down inside all of us - is the desire to know the truth, however good that may be or however painful it may be. The opposite is also true. We human beings don't want to be deceived by lies, distortions, and half-truths. Yet we try to avoid the truth or distort the truth or manipulate the truth. Remember the scene in our Lord's passion when Jesus tells Pilate that he has come to testify to the truth? Like Pilate, we are tempted to ask, "What is truth?" Pilate rejected and condemned the Truth because he condemned and rejected God who was standing right in front of him in the person of Jesus.

God alone is truth and the source of all that is true. So the question isn't so much "What is truth?" but rather, "Who is Truth?" In this passage, we are reminded that God is Spirit, and that God is the source of our drive for truth. This drive for truth in all aspects of life comes from God. The Holy Spirit is none other than the Spirit of truth and this Spirit will guide us, lead us, show us, reveal to us the truth. Ultimately that Truth is the Love that binds us to one another through the gift and mercy of God's Spirit. The apostle Paul reminds us this morning, in his letter to the Romans that: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. "Where the Spirit is, love is. Where the Spirit teaches, people learn love. Faith communities are Spirit-schools of love, engaging everyone, from little children to grandparents, in lifelong learning. In the school of the Spirit, everyone majors in love."

The Holy Spirit, as the declarer of Truth and as the God who is love, will declare to us what is to come, and all that belongs to the other members of the Trinity will be made known to us. Because the Holy Spirit is God-still-with-us. It is our task as a church community to open ourselves to the Spirit of Truth, that leads us into authentic living, not only as individuals, but as a community of faith with a strong presence in our community.

Today, we hear Jesus teach us:

He will send us his Spirit, the Spirit of truth, who comes to us from God. This Spirit of truth will be with us forever, in us and around us. From this Spirit of truth, we will personally discover the truth about God the Creator, the truth about God the Son and the truth about the Holy Spirit, one God, forevermore.

Amen.