

## WORSHIP AT HOME – 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 – TRINITY SUNDAY

Dear Friends,

The year is moving on apace and we now reach Trinity Sunday. Colin Watson is quoted as saying that when Trinity Sunday come round any sensible preacher will call in sick! Mainly because it is a difficult concept anyway – and it is the one day set aside which works with a concept and not a happening. However, it is an important part of our theology and preachers can only do their best to bring it to life in people's minds.

I hope that you are all well and finding the loosening of restrictions working well for you. Every blessing,

*Margaret*

**Thought for the day:** The mystery of God – Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier all at once – is beyond our human understanding, yet closer to us than breathing.

**Call to worship:** God, you can speak to us in so many ways. Sometimes your voice is noisy, sometimes it is quiet. Sometimes it is very clear, sometimes it is difficult to make out.

It is often drowned out by the noise of the world, by the words of other people, by our own thoughts and preoccupations.

As we worship you now, help us to listen, to hear you correctly, and then to carry your word to the world.

**Amen.**

God is one and God is three.

God in you and God in me.

God in trust and God in doubt.

God draws us in – and sends us out.

God is with us now, and always will be – God the Holy Trinity. **Amen.**

**The words to 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty' written by Reginald Heber [1783-1826] and based on Revelation 4: 8-11. Singing the Faith 11**

1 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

2 Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea.

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

3 Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee, though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,  
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4 Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

**Prayer:** God of love, we rejoice today that you care for each one of us – that we matter so much to you that you want to share with us your gift of life and lead us into a living, loving, relationship with you.

God of grace, we bless you for expressing your love so wonderfully in Christ – through his birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection and his glorious exaltation.

God of power, we thank you for continuing to bless us each day through your Holy Spirit – nurturing our faith, renewing our vision, guiding our footsteps and equipping us for service.

God of all, Three in One, and One in Three, we praise you and we thank you that you have called us your children, your friends, your people, and that you are always with us. We thank you for your love which surrounds us wherever we may be and whatever we may face.

Receive now our worship, offered to you in awe and wonder, in joy and thanksgiving.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit receive our praise. **Amen**

We know, Lord, that while we long to be exactly the people you would have us be, we do fall short. Forgive us, Lord, for all those times when we have hurt you and hurt others through careless words or actions. Forgive us, for all our weakness, frailty and limitations. Speak to us so that we may experience more of your love and reflect more of your goodness and live with more of your power.  
God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – hear our prayer.

Through God's grace and mercy we are assured of forgiveness, knowing that he will walk alongside us always. **Amen**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Isaiah 40: 12-17 and 27-31 [NIV]:** Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counsellor?

Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him, all nations are as nothing.

Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God?

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

#### **Comment:**

There are some things which we sense, but which start slithering out of our grasp as we try to pin them down in words. Some deep relationships are like this, and some intense experiences. It is also true of the nature of God. Whenever we attempt to explain what we mean by the Trinity we are bound to end up falling short of the truth, and inadequately picturing what is simply so deep and vast that it is beyond the power of human understanding.

Isaiah tries to give some idea of the huge scale of God in relation to familiar countries, resources and natural events. What he was trying to stress was what vastness *doesn't* mean. It doesn't mean that the God we fail to understand is therefore somehow remote and aloof from us. He is not subject to the natural limitations of our universe as we are but that does not mean that he has no grasp of us or our situation. His very all-knowingness means that both the smallest details and the widest sweeps of space are intimately known by the Living God. He knows about us in the smallest details of our lives and he cares and is interested in everything we do – and those things we may dream about.

Perhaps we could take the image of a young baby being suckled. We can see that here the baby has a wonderful sense of what being loved, cared for and nurtured is all about. Yet all it can do itself is gurgle its understanding and is probably more likely to show that knowledge by falling asleep, trusting and satisfied.

Susan Sayers [Living Stones year A] says that is rather how it is with us. To understand the nature of God, and what the Trinity really means, is in one sense always beyond our scope as humans. God is never going to be quantifiable in human terms because he so far surpasses what it means to be human. But in another sense we are able to understand his nature as we experience relationship with him and feel his love, and his nurturing and committed care. All our attempts to express that are rather like the baby's gurgling – or a contented and trusting tranquillity which shows in our lives.

Later we shall read from Matthew of the great commission, sending the disciples out into the whole world to baptise people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – the one God in all his completeness and community. It is the relationship with this God which transforms his people rather than an impossible definitive explanation of it.

In the end we realise that however we might tie ourselves up in knots trying to get our heads around this concept, actually it is knowing the love of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives which matters. Our trust in that relationship is the bedrock.

**Illustration: David Adam [Sermon Illustrations]:**

A child went down to the beach and dug a hole in the sand. Then she went down to the sea and brought some water to fill the hole. In a moment, the water had disappeared into the sand. She went back for more water – and then more, again and again. But the same thing happened each time. The little girl became exhausted and began to cry. Meanwhile the tide had been coming in. Her father showed her how to make a channel for the sea, so that it would flow naturally into the hole and fill it.

We are like that little girl – we try to fill our minds with ideas about God and often exhaust ourselves. We talk too much.

We need to wait upon God, knowing he will come to us.

Trying to understand the Trinity is like trying to pour the whole sea into a small hole. Yet we can rest in the Trinity, and enjoy the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**The words to 'All over the world' written by Roy Turner c. 1954 ThankYou Music. Mission Praise 18**

1 All over the world the Spirit is moving, all over the world as the prophet said it would be;  
All over the world there's a mighty revelation of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

2 All over his Church, God's Spirit is moving, all over his Church as the prophet said it would be;  
All over his Church there's a mighty revelation of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

3 Right here in this place the Spirit is moving, right here in this place as the prophet said it would be;  
Right here in this place there's a mighty revelation of the glory of the Lord as the waters covers the sea.

**Matthew 28: 16-20 [NIV]: The Great Commission**

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted.

Then Jesus came to them and said: 'All authority on heaven and in earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

**Comment:**

The word Trinity does not appear in the Bible. Even so, the experience of God as Father Creator, as Son Redeemer, as Spirit Guide and Strengthener can be known and shared. At the baptism of Jesus there was the voice of the Father and the descent of the Spirit – the Trinity there to be experienced.

When Jesus tells of his return to the Father, he promises the coming of the Spirit of God. Once again, this is mention of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At the very end of Matthew's Gospel, the risen Jesus comes to the eleven disciples. They experienced his presence there with them as he tells of his power and authority.

He gives the disciples a purpose – a commission. They are to 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' Again we have the Trinity. It is vital to remember that this is not just a formula to be used at a service, but a way of life. The reality of God as a Trinity – Three Persons in One God – is there for us to experience and to share with others. We are asked to immerse people in the Trinity – in the power, in the presence and in the peace of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are to know for ourselves – and to encourage others to be aware – that our lives are lived in the presence of God in Three persons – Holy Trinity.

Often at the end of a service we might say together: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of us now and for ever more.' It isn't a request but a reality that we should be aware of and live. The words are to remind us that we are in the presence of the Trinity and we go out and live in the presence – we are immersed in the Trinity in our lives.

### **Meditation of Matthew: [Nick Fawcett – An Amazing Man Year A]:**

'What's in a name?' people ask, and, of course, it depends – some chosen at random, some full of meaning; some just a label, others a clue as to the person beneath.

For *us* names mattered, three in particular- Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Definitely more than labels, speaking of one yet three.

God the Father, our Father; the one who gave us life, who brought to birth everything that is and that shall be – who creates, sustains, provides and nurtures, helping his children to grow.

God the Son, flesh and blood – the divine with a human face, sharing our laughter, our tears, our life, our death – the one who stood in our place that we might rise to his.

God the Holy Spirit, free as the wind, moving where it will, moving within – the one who teaches, inspires, guides, transforms – imparting gifts, producing fruits.

Three names, one God;

Three persons, one truth;

Each complete, yet reduced without the other;

Each separate, yet all joined.

What's in a name? More than you may think. Introduce yourself and see.

### **Prayer:**

Father God, your purpose is for all, for you are the Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of humankind, Ruler over history. You are always at work, always involved in our lives – calling, guiding, speaking and responding – everyone important to you, no matter who they are, each having a place in your purpose. So, then, we pray for all in our world who feel they are drifting – all who search for meaning to their lives, a sense of direction, a goal to strive for.

May they find in Jesus Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life. In faith we lift them before you.

Son of God, your love is for all, for you lived and died for others, reaching out to both rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, righteous and unrighteous – nobody outside your care and no-one beyond your grace. You gave your all, enduring death on a cross, so that everyone willing to receive you may share in the joy of your kingdom.

So, then, we pray for all in our world today who long for love – those who yearn for a meaningful relationship and those whose precious relationships have ended in tears – those who have been

abandoned or orphaned as children, and those who cannot have children of their own. We pray for those cut off from family and friends – and we hold before you those who face the trauma of bereavement. May they discover in you a love that will never let them go. In faith we lift them before you.

Spirit of God, your peace is for all, for you are at work in every heart, seen or unseen, recognised or unrecognised, striving to break down the barriers which keep us from one another, from ourselves and from you.

We pray, then, for all in our world who hunger for peace – all who are tormented by fear, torn by doubt, troubled by anxieties, tortured by guilt – families separated by feuds, communities racked by division, and nations ravaged by war.

May they find through you peace in body, mind and spirit. In faith we lift them before you.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring you our world, thankful that it is also *your* world, precious to you and shaped ultimately by your will.

Remake, redeem, renew it through your sovereign power.

May all people everywhere come to know your purpose, experience your love and receive your peace, and may each rejoice in the new life you so yearn to give them. In faith we lift them before you. **Amen**

**The words to ‘Father, we love you’ written by Donna Adkins [b.1940] Singing the Faith 6:**

1 Father, we love you, we worship and adore you; glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

2 Jesus, we love you, we worship and adore you, glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

3 Spirit we love you, we worship and adore you, glorify your name in all the earth.

Glorify your name, glorify your name, glorify your name in all the earth.

**2 Corinthians 13: 11-14 [NIV]:** Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All God’s people here send their greetings. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.’

**Closing Prayer and Blessing:**

Be still and rest in the peace of God the Three in One.

Be strong and trust in the tranquillity of God.

Be quiet and rejoice in the beauty of God.

Be open and be drawn into the depths of God.

Be courageous and set sail in the sea of God.

Be yourself and be enveloped in the heart of God, who has made all things, loves all things, redeems all things, today and always. **Amen**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be your strength, wherever you go – may the love of God be your joy, whatever your circumstances – and may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be your inspiration, whatever you do. **Amen**