

Trinity Sunday

7 June 2020

Exodus 34. 1-8 The 10 Commandments, 2nd tablets

Song of the Three Wise Men vv.29-34

2 Corinthians 13. 11-13 Paul's benediction

Matthew 28.16-20 The Great Commission

May our words and our thoughts ever praise you, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.

For many centuries, the church numbered the last Sundays of the year as Sundays after Trinity, because most Christians have apprehended the Divine mystery as Trinity in Unity-- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- three persons, co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial, creator, redeemer and sanctifier.

Last century, many churches began to number these Sundays as Sundays after Pentecost, celebrating that, until the Son returns in power and great glory, God is present in his world through his Spirit. Yet we sense God and come to God and love God as Trinity, three persons in one God. Now out of sight, but never out of reach; beyond our understanding, but never beyond our desiring.

Time, too, is a trinity -- we speak of time as past, present and future, even though we understand that all time is of the same nature. We proclaim "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again". The Lord of all time.

Who has ever heard of a genie who gave four wishes? who has ever heard of two blind mice, or two musketeers, or five little pigs? Or Goldilocks and the six bears? No, it has to be three – three is completeness, three is wholeness, three is all.

Public speakers are taught to make three main points, and to make them three times: tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell'em, and tell'em what you've told 'em. TV news follows the same pattern and many of the memorable biddings in the Book of Common Prayer **are** memorable because of their triple phrasing.

The power of three is so strong in our ability to absorb information and to make sense of it and to apply it it's as though when God created humankind in his image he gave us something of his Trinitarian nature. We, too, are a Trinity of body, mind and spirit, although most of us don't take equal care of each aspect of our human nature.

Have you noticed how significant threesomes are in the Scriptures – Adam had three sons when the world began, so did Noah when the world was renewed. In the Old Testament, the Lord is

described as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the 10 commandments prescribe some of our threefold obligations – to God, to each other and to ourselves.

In the New Testament, we have the three wise men, the three pre-eminent disciples: Peter, James and John, we have St Paul's three virtues: faith, hope and love, and, of course, Jesus was raised from death on the third day.

The mystery of the triune God is not included in the two ancient creeds of the church, the so-called Apostles Creed and the so-called Nicene Creed, because it is not explicitly stated in Scripture – but the teaching is clearly derived from Scripture, from Divine revelation and from human experience of God over many centuries.

We have multiple evidence that God was glorified as Trinity in the worship services of the church as early as the end of the first century, most notably in the teaching document known as the Didache, which may well have been in use even before the last Gospel was written, the Gospel according to John.

But the most important aspect of our Trinitarian nature is our personal three-fold relationship to the godhead: we are chosen by God, and saved by God, and commissioned by God, as we heard in today's Gospel. Let us pray that we, too, may honour our threefold Divine commission in what we say and how we live – even in these unusual times.

From the Book of Common Prayer:

*Almighty God, the Father of all mercies,
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.
And give us, we pray, such a due sense of all your mercies
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we show forth your praise not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you, in holiness and righteousness, all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

TRINITY SUNDAY



The Trinity is an expression of the being of God that most Christians accept without understanding.