

Trinity Sunday

[Proverbs 8.1-4, 8.22-31](#)

[Romans 5.1-5](#)

[John 16.12-15](#)

Today we celebrate Trinity Sunday. Unlike most weeks of the Christian year, today we do not focus on an event in Jesus' life or a saying from the Bible or a theme like forgiveness or prayer or even the heroes, men and women whose stories from the Scriptures teach us more about God and more about how to live in ways that please God. Instead, we are focussing on a theological concept - Trinity. Over and over again the Bible tells us that there is one God. We know that God has been revealed to us as **Loving Father**/ Creator/ Lord Almighty, **as Son**- Jesus our friend and brother and as **Spirit** who guides us in all truth and enables us to become the people who God designed us to be. The creeds all are framed around this very concept: We believe in God, and then there's a paragraph for Father, Son and Spirit; three persons in one God. How do we get our heads around this idea of there being only one God but there being three distinct persons within what theologians call 'the Godhead'?

There are some very important reasons why it is important for Christians to understand this concept of Trinity as it **cuts to the very core of our belief that we are made right with God through the cross of Jesus**. The death of an ordinary human could not have had this result. It explains that God is a **God of relationship as Father, Son and Spirit communicate** and love flows within the Godhead. So we will look at some ways of understanding this more fully.

You no doubt know about **love triangles**- they are the basis of many operas, books, and TV soapies! The main character falls in love with another person, but the object of their love has his or her eyes on a third person. Who will become the happy couple? This narrative plays out time and again in popular media. The Trinity is a love triangle- but very different from our human experience because our love is fallen and quite different from God's ever giving, enabling and self-sacrificing love. **We are created in God's image to participate in that Holy love Triangle**. The human love triangles that we are so familiar with are messy because people don't turn their lives over to God's love and selfishness and sin creeps in. God's love in Trinity is perfect and we are invited into that love. **It is a helpful image insofar as it is about relationships, and so is God: Father, Son and Spirit are in endless communication and love**.

People have tried to explain the Trinity using images like an apple - skin, flesh, seeds but all parts are needed to make an apple. The yolk, white and shell are all needed to make an egg. **These fall short because they are parts, not the whole**. We believe that Jesus is fully God, ditto the Spirit. Egg, larvae, butterfly and ice, water, water vapour are both images that are often used. I find these quite helpful with kids, but **these images are really 'modalism' - which refers to different ways of being at different times**. When Jesus offered himself and died on the cross, God the Father was still God, the Holy Spirit was still God.

So how do we see this concept of Trinity in Scripture? Our reading from Proverbs points to the **ancient understanding within Judaism that God is Spirit as much as Creator**. We heard about the Spirit of God way back in Genesis 1 where the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters in that poetic account of creation.

Wisdom is the call of God, inviting humanity to join intimately with our creator: *she cries aloud: ⁴ 'To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all humanity.*

And then, in a reversal of the question God asks Job *'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?'* pointing to Job's limited grasp of knowledge and the reason why things happen on earth, Wisdom declares *'²⁷ I was there when he set the heavens in place'*

Psalms 8 proclaims **the majesty of creation and praises God as Creator**. We will have all been moved by the beauty and abundance of nature- a whole paddock of wild flowers, a mighty waterfall, the night sky; these all elicit from us a sense of awe and we praise God our creator.

In our Gospel reading we have part of the farewell discourse as Jesus gives his followers his final instructions. Jesus **is returning to the Father but will send the Spirit to be our advocate and guide** and he says that the Spirit *will guide you into all the truth*

Paul had a quite developed understanding of the Trinity- he just did not use that word- it's not found in the Bible at all! Paul's blessing, well known as 'The Grace'. In Romans 5 he says: *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.