



Trinity Sunday:

Creation, Incarnation, Revelation

Homegroup study for w/c 16 June

"...the words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love." (C.S. Lewis)

In John 14, we find Jesus not only promising his disciples the presence of the Spirit (v16), but also that he will come to them (v18) and indeed, that both he and the Father will make their home with a believer (v23). In short, he promises them the ongoing presence of all three members of the Trinity. How does that affect your view of what came to pass at Pentecost?

On the one hand, the words can be simple, "Trinity in unity and unity in trinity". But like an Escher drawing the more you look, the more complex and more seemingly impossible it all becomes. All the illustrations we have are partial; perhaps likening God to a clover leaf – three leaflets yet a single whole. Or again, we often talk of the persons of the Trinity – a term that derives from the Latin *persona*, originally meaning the masks worn by performers in the theatre to denote the role they were playing, sometimes even changing mask mid-scene.

Rather than tackle this intellectually, it may be helpful to reflect on the way that the medieval artist Andrei Rublev depicts the Trinity in the painting shown here¹. We see the three members of the Trinity – in the picture embodied as the three strangers who visited Abraham (Genesis 18) – with the Father on the left as we look; Jesus in the centre and the Holy Spirit on the right.

We see God as community-in-mission; as shown, they are open to being joined by a fourth – the viewer – who is invited to complete the circle, to join the dance, to complete the movements of God in the world by their own response.

Light a candle, play some quiet music, focus on the painting and contemplate how God wants to engage with us, with you... if you are able, share those thoughts within the group.

This is also a picture of the church in the world – as community-in-mission it is relational, diverse and communal. That is what is being reproduced from the Trinity. The theologian, David Bosch described this as being that, "*Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God.*" How does that help us understand what God wants to be in our community?

In considering the nature of God, we can say that Jesus represents humanity in the Godhead and the Holy Spirit represented the Godhead in humanity. How does that help you see the threefold yet singular nature of God?

We also encounter the Trinity in creation; see the opening of both Genesis and Hebrews. How does the thought that Jesus himself sustains creation affect the way we might approach – individually and collectively – the creation mandate to be good stewards of what God has made?

So, why does this matter? It does, because a singular God can only ever be distinct from their creation, but through Jesus, God has been with us, has been one of us, can speak for us and through the Spirit remain with us today. How do think it would feel to worship a God who could never understand you?

¹ If you want to see it in more detail then you can find it online at <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0b/Angelsatmamre-trinity-rublev-1410.jpg> or search Wikipedia for "Trinity (Andrei Rublev)"