

Made for Community

2018-05-26 - Year B - Trinity Sunday - The Rev. Christopher Klukas

Exodus 3:1–6; Psalm 93; Romans 8:12–17; John 3:1–16

- Three persons, one God
- The how of the Trinity is a mystery and various attempts at an explanation have led to numerous heresies in the early church.
- Today I want to ask “what difference does this doctrine make in our lives?”

Who is God?

- 1 John 4:8, 16 - “God is love”
 - Before God created the earth, and the sun, and the milky way, and all the rest of the universe, there was just God.
 - Love implies a relationship because love requires both a lover and a beloved.
 - Who did God love before he created the universe?
- God is a community of Love
 - Darrell Johnson: “In the deepest mystery of his being, God is an intimate relationship, a fellowship, a community of love.”¹
 - Perichoresis (peri “around,” and choresis coming from the same root at choreography) it means mutual indwelling, or mutual interpenetration. Picture a circular dance with the three persons swirling around, in, and out of each other.
 - The very word “Trinity” speaks to this reality - Tri--unity
- God was certainly not lonely or bored before he created the universe, he was infinitely satisfied by the community of the Godhead.
- So why did God make us? It was an overflowing of divine love. God’s love was too good to keep to himself.
 - “Why then did God create a world? God created the world for something like the same reason that we find it hard to keep a secret! Good things are hard to keep...Why therefore could not He, by a free impulsion of His Love, let love overflow and bring new worlds into being? God could not keep, as it were, the secret of His Love — and the telling of it was Creation.”²

Who are we?

- Genesis 1:26-27 - In the beginning God made man and woman in his own image
 - Each and every human life has value, because every person has been made in the image of God.
- What does it mean to be made in God’s image?
 - It means lots of things, but one important aspect that I would like to highlight is that we were made for community and made for love.

¹ Darrell Johnson, *Experiencing the Trinity* (Regent College Publishing, 2002), p. 51

² Archbishop Fulton Sheen, *The Divine Romance: Love's Overflow*.

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=3783>

- We were made to reciprocate God's love, but we were also made to push that love outwards towards others, just like God did for us.
 - Parenting, adoption, evangelism, participating in the fellowship of the church, these are all examples of love pushing outward towards others.
- Genesis 2:18 - "It is not good that the man should be alone..."
 - "solitary [confinement] can cause a specific psychiatric syndrome, characterized by hallucinations; panic attacks; overt paranoia; diminished impulse control; hypersensitivity to external stimuli; and difficulties with thinking, concentration and memory. Some inmates lose the ability to maintain a state of alertness, while others develop crippling obsessions."³
 - Carrie can always tell when I have been spending a day entirely by myself working on a sermon or doing research. When I come home on days like that I am quiet, and tired, lethargic, and subdued. We aren't meant to be alone. We were made for community.
- The greatest commandments: love God and love your neighbor. (Mark 12:28-31)
- 1 John 4:7-8 - if we love God we must also love one another.

Reconciliation

- But there is a problem. The image of God in our lives has been tarnished by sin.
 - Both our passage from Romans and our Gospel reading show the process of people being drawn into relationship with God. But this implies that they (we) are previously estranged from God.
 - Adam and Eve were in perfect, face to face, relationship with God. But they went against God's will and ate from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden.
 - This was the first sin, and because of it Adam and Eve were separated from God and had to leave the garden. This propensity for sin has been passed down from generation to Generation.
 - "What is the human condition? The universal human condition is that, though made for fellowship with our Creator, we have been cut off from him by self-centered rebellion against him, leading to guilt, shame, and fear of death and judgment. This is the state of sin." (ACNA Catechism, Q2).
 - "Sin alienates me from God, my neighbor, God's good creation, and myself..." (ACNA Catechism, Q3)
- If we were made for relationships, and community, and love, and sin alienates us from God and our neighbor, then we have a problem. But God has a solution.
- God's love for us wasn't just in creation, but also in re-creation. John 3:16.
- When Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" he experienced for the only time in eternity what it was like to be separated from the perichoresis of the Trinity. That must have been harder for him than the physical suffering. Jesus experienced our separation, so that he could bring about reconciliation.
- This is what we receive when we put our faith in him. John 3:14-15.

³ <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/what-does-solitary-confinement-do-to-your-mind/>