**Home Service Sheet for Sunday, 4th June 2023 (Trinity Sunday)**

**Call To Worship                             Psalm 8:1-4**

O Lord, our Lord,
    how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

   Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
    to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
    the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
    and the son of man that you care for him?

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious and ever-loving God, You are worthy of all praise! You have revealed Your glory in creation, and have proclaimed it from the very skies themselves. As we look at this world which is Your handiwork, we are just amazed. You love us and have made Yourself known to us. Even in our sins You came and found us. You drew us back to You and died in our place Lord Jesus. Forgive us our sins, and help us to turn away from them. Thank you for Your obedience to the Father’s will, and thank You for the forgiveness You have bought for us at the cross. Be close to us today in this time of worship. This we ask in Jesus’ name, amen

**Hymn                                     Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty**by ***Reginald Heber***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SHDNs7Dt5M&feature=youtu.be>

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 eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,

only thou art holy; there is none beside thee

perfect in pow'r, 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!

**The Lord’s Prayer**

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 that 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.

**1st Bible Reading                            Genesis 1:26-31**

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image,
            in the image of God he created him;
            male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

**2nd Bible Reading                           Matthew 28:16-20**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them inthe name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

**Reflection**

One of the more difficult theological doctrines, or teachings, that we struggle to get our heads around is that of the Trinity. Our hymn for today summarises the Trinity as simply, ‘God in three persons, blessed Trinity’. It emphasises the important point that God is one, and yet is also three Persons. It’s really hard, if not impossible, for us to fully understand what this actually means. There are all kinds of illustrations people use to try to help others understand, but each is ultimately inadequate in truly showing us what God is like. This is the way in which God has revealed Himself to us in Scripture, and so it is the true reflection of Him and His nature.

Our two Bible readings today reveal this wonderful truth in subtle, and yet obvious ways. Let’s begin with the reading from Genesis. Notice that in the very first chapter of the Bible God reveals Himself to us as both singular and plural. In verse 26 God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” The Hebrew word for God is actually plural, and yet when God does something the verb is singular (e.g. ‘God said’, rather than ‘the gods say’). This hints at the fact that God is somehow both one and several (or three as He specifically reveals in Scripture).

That verse also tells us that humanity was created in the ‘image of God’. Again there is debate about what exactly this means, but what we can know is that in some way(s) we are like God, or similar to him. Perhaps it is to do with our thinking and creativity that sets us apart from all other creatures? Maybe it’s about us being able to live in relationship with God? It certainly shows us that we represent the pinnacle of God’s creation with responsibilities to tend and care for God’s creation. Perhaps we are to represent God to one another and to the whole of creation?

The fact that God reveals Himself to us in this way, at the very beginning of the Bible, tells us that God is constant and consistent. In creating humanity both male and female, God reveals that His image cannot be fully captured by one single person. God is much more than this! In creating this world we also hear Him say that He is pleased with all that He has made, and He saw that it was good. God is perfect and has created a perfect world, and yet we have spoilt that through our sin and disobedience.

It is only through Jesus’ death on the cross for us that this problem is sorted out once for all. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection God has begun the new creation by calling us to Himself and transforming us by His Spirit (see Romans 12:1-2). Note that in the last words recorded in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus commands His disciples, and us through them, to make disciples and baptise them “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. We’re back to God in three persons, blessed Trinity, being revealed by Jesus as He prepares to return to the Father’s right hand in heaven.

In relating to God we need to recognise that He is three separate, and yet connected, Persons. We don’t have to fully understand how that works, but we do need to trust Him. Just as the Godhead is a relationship involving Father, Son and Spirit, so we through Christ can relate to God. We are to pray to God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. In proclaiming the Gospel we are to present God as He has revealed Himself to us – God in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can know the Father and come to Him because of what Jesus has done for us, enabled by the Spirit at work in us. Amen!

**Prayers of intercession**

Loving God, we come boldly to Your throne of grace, asking for Your mercy and grace today.

·      Father of heaven, whose great love paid the ransom for our souls: We pray for the world, created by Your love, for its nations and governments … Extend to them Your peace, pardoning, love, mercy and grace.

·      Almighty Son, incarnate Word, our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord: We pray for the Church, created for Your glory, for its ministry to reflect those works of yours … Extend to us Your salvation, growth, mercy and grace.

·      Eternal Spirit, by whose breath the soul is raised from sin and death: We pray for families and individuals, created in Your image, for the lonely, the bereaved, the sick and the dying … Breathe on them the breath of life and bring them to Your mercy and grace.

·      Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son, Mysterious Godhead, Three in One: We pray for ourselves, for your Church, for all whom we remember before You …

Bring us all to bow before Your throne in heaven, to receive life and pardon, mercy and grace for all eternity. These things we ask in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

**Prayer of Blessing**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for this time of worship, and for Your presence with us today. May now the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of us today and forevermore. Amen. (Based on 2 Corinthians 13:13)