



Central Telford Parish

Week Beginning 27th May 2018

“Making Sense of The Trinity”

- **Introduction**

“Our God is a Great Big God” is one of our favourite all age songs in Church and it says something very profound in a very simple way. God is big – bigger than you or I can possibly imagine. And that’s a good thing because if he was just like you or I, he wouldn’t be as impressive or mysterious. But he is. That doesn’t stop us trying to understand him – which is a good thing! It’s important, though that we ask the questions with the reality that we can and should never expect to understand God completely. And so to The Trinity!

- **Welcome**

What is the one thing you wish you could understand - eg how a car works?

- **Worship**

Read Titus 3:4-6. Spend time praising the individual members of the Trinity, giving thanks for what you have received from them. Conclude by thanking God for the awesome majesty of his nature, three in one!

- **Word**

The most important thing to say is that the Bible never actually mentions the Trinity but repeatedly refers to the trinity (eg Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14) in such ways that tell us about the Trinity. It is very hard to define the Trinity - the simplest, best, and most traditional definition of the Trinity is that God is one in essence, and three in person. To put the doctrine in complete terms, the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God; yet at the same time the Father is not the Son or the Holy Spirit, the Son is not the Father or the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son.

The Father is God - Read Matthew 6:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:14-15.

The Son is God - Read John 5:18; 10:30,33; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3.

The Holy Spirit is God - Read Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:11.

They are distinct persons, but one "essence". We can use illustrations (eg Water can be Ice, Steam, or simply Water) but they only tell part of the story.

This next bit is probably the most important part of our study don’t bypass this but talk about it and ask the question: Taking each member of the Trinity

- What is the particular function or role of each member of the Trinity?
- What would be missing in the character of God if that member were not a part of the Trinity?
- What happens if we emphasise the work of that member of the Trinity above the other members?

These are important questions because they help us to gain something of the mystery and the character of the Trinity – each member has a character and a role, a purpose and a meaning. To lose or emphasise them is to lose balance in our understanding of God.

❖ Read Acts 10:36-38, 1 Corinthians 12:3-6 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

- How does Paul understand the work of each member of the Trinity in the spread of the Gospel, first of all in Jesus' ministry and then in the early Church?
- How should we be thinking of each member of the Trinity in what God is doing in the church today?

In a world which wants to be able to explain and understand everything, we need to resist the temptation to try and explain the Trinity but, instead, the Trinity as a mystery - something which adds to the wonder and majesty of God.

- **Works**

There will be a number of people who will come to the end of this session and say "I didn't understand that at all". There will be some who say "but we still haven't been told how the Trinity can be one God and three different persons". DON'T PANIC!! You are not alone! Share your thoughts ...

Talk about the things you have learned in this session and where your understanding or approach to the Trinity has been limited in the past. In particular, talk about the members of the Trinity you have failed to recognise: spend some time in quiet asking God to show you how to get to know the Trinity in all its fullness.

- **A thought to finish with**

I once had a "discussion" with a Jehovah's Witness (who don't believe in the Trinity) who said "*I can't believe in a God I can't understand*" and my response was "*I can't believe in a God I **can** understand*". God is awesome and majestic and if I could understand him then I would be able to understand all the things of this world including suffering, why wars happen and why life is unfair.

I don't understand how a nuclear power station works but I can still press a switch on the wall and a light comes on. I don't need to understand how a nuclear power station works to use it and in the same way, we can be Christians without having to be able to understand or describe the Trinity. It's called faith – and all God calls us to do is to press the button and trust him for the rest!