

Trinity Sunday - 30th May John 3. 1-17

Last week, at Pentecost, we saw how God speaks to us in OUR language - a way we recognise and understand. We saw that he speaks every language, he is desperate to invite us all to know him - and we, as a church, should speak many languages, but I gave you some homework - to focus on what your language is, and what is God saying to you? What did you notice God was showing you last week?

I saw a rainbow in a field - and realised that God was with me, and a tough decision was the right one.

I had a conversation with a stranger about God and going to church, and I realised that, like Elijah, I am not the only one left! There are many Christians hidden away in Alderholt.

I also had a couple of good run-ins in the Bible.

How about you? What did God say to you?

If last week was about speaking and hearing, this week it's a different sense. Seeing!

Now I'm going to say something obvious, but it's important.

You need the light to see. You can feel your way in the dark, you can listen in the dark - but you cannot see without light....

The more light - the more you see - showing my age!

Things in the natural world often point to things in the spiritual world, so I'm talking here about spiritual seeing and spiritual light.

Today we read about Nicodemus coming in the night to see Jesus. So it's clear, he's in the dark, and not wanting to be seen

But he comes to the light - Jesus - so he's got the right idea.

He comes with confusion, uncertainty, doubt, darkness...

Honest questions..

And I love that Jesus loves our questions - he's really happy for us to come and say - I don't get it Lord! But you have to be prepared for some tough replies.

I thought I'd teach you a song - so we can have a theme song for today's sermon..

He is the Lord, and He reigns on high

Spoke into the darkness, created the light -

This is about light and dark.. Nicodemus and Jesus, us and God

It's also about the creator - who made it all - who spoke and said - let there be light.

Who is like unto Him, never ending in days -

Yes, he's eternal. From before the beginning, to beyond the end!

And He comes in power when we call on His name

Ahh - so now we're talking about the power of God - which is the Holy Spirit

People get tied up in knots about the spirit
There are 3 groups - the really keen, the really anti, and the really don't care

I think some are only anti because others are so keen, and vice versa.

So the keen ones say — have you received the spirit?
- Are you born again..

And they've got a point - Jesus says - you must be born again, by the spirit
And elsewhere he says - when I go, I will send the holy spirit

But I'm not so happy about adding adjectives to the word Christian
I'm a born-again Christian
I'm an eco Christian
I'm a short Christian, an angry christian

Isn't this what Paul talks about in Corinthians - where some say they follow Apollos or Cephas?
We're just Christians. Not even liberal, Church of England or snake handling should be added.

And why would having a fresh start - being born again, be so controversial anyway, that people want to skip out that step?
"I'm learning to swim" Right we'll start with butterfly - what?
Usually we're happy to start at the beginning. Be a baby in Christ!
That's ok!

And while we're here - babies have no choice about being born, as far as we know.
So maybe our own second birth, and baptism in the spirit is not up to us either! We can ask and pray - but it's not our choice!

Right - where was I - oh yes - the chorus

Show your power Oh lord our God

Because some people get a big kick out of the spirit
- it's great - worship in the spirit, speaking in tongues - all good - I love it!

I've seen bishops dancing round the altar in the spirit - truly.

But others - have never even felt the spirit.
I know a lady who is good, kind, a brilliant saint and Christian. And once she said to me - I've never felt the holy spirit. And I was like - oh , wow!

And then I thought, well, maybe that's ok. She's not looking for that experience, doesn't need it, or want it, perhaps it's not her personality type.

And I thought do you need to know that the spirit is there for it to be working, for it to be there?
And I would say no.
My friend who does such an outstanding job, she is born again of the spirit - but she's not aware of it,

Just as an example of that - You don't know your liver is working - but you would know if it wasn't there or stopped!

Just because you can't feel the spirit doesn't mean you ain't got it!

Your gospel oh Lord is the hope of this nation

This good news, is here for sharing - our nation, the world, needs the hope of God

It's the power of God for our salvation -

This spirit, this good news - is here to do Good, here to save people (and saving is a good thing, right? Better than downing.)

We read today that God loves the world - sent his son - not to condemn it - not to criticise and judge or make people feel bad, or be hypercritical.

But to save it..

where did our churches and Christianity go so wrong?

- That people feel guilty when they meet a vicar, assume church can't be fun, or that Christians are always "holier than thou"?

If only they could see us -

We're just a bunch of people clinging to a life raft!

We ask not for riches, but look to the cross -

This is a Great song because it has the whole of the trinity - yes its Trinity Sunday
And here's the cross - Jesus with us, setting us right with God

And for our inheritance give us the lost

Christianity has to be in action - living out our faith.,

Its not just about head knowledge or all believing the same thing or the right thing

- it IS about doing stuff - we talked a lot about giving to charity - because faith without action is as St James said - dead.

So - to wrap things up - Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer

Can't have one without the other - belong together - knitted, mixed up, interminably interlocked and intertwined - trying to take Jesus out of God or the Spirit out - its like taking the tomato sauce out of spaghetti bolognese - its impossible - and it makes into something else!!

The trinity matters - because its God expressing their-self in many different ways

Creator, universal unconditional love, ultimate true justice and fairness

Human friend, and redeemer

Advocate, comforter, power, guide, explainer...

And my homework this week is - draw 3 circles, for which is biggest in your life - father, son or holy spirit

Which do you relate to? And Why!! Sometimes it changes over time.

Particularly pay attention to - why is the smallest one, so small?

They should be 3 equal sizes - that's balanced, and complete - but we are not balanced and complete - we are a work in progress, imperfect, wounded, sinful.

We do not "see clearly" yet.

So which part of the Trinity do you neglect, and why?