

Trinity Sunday June 19 2011 Ray Slade

Holy Communion 1st Reading: 2 Cor 13 11- 14 (p1102)
Morning Worship 2nd Reading: Matthew 28 16-20 (p946)

In 1994 I became head of a CE secondary school in SE London. It was called Picardy school. A failing, urban, borough school in a very challenging community. Relaunched as a CE school it was to be called **TRINITY** School.

My first assembly with the new students in Year 7 went like this. I thought I'd explain the word **Trinity**.

The assembly started well. I asked for words starting with TRI. I got tripod, triangle, tricycle. I was getting in to the meat of it when another hand went up. I worried but asked anyway. **TRIPLE!** (Never work with children or animals they say in the media.)

Both our readings today contain what we might call Trinitarian statements. Please have them open. 946 (Jesus), 1102 (Paul).

In the first it's what we often call the 'grace' and we use it liturgically in worship.

*May the **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **love** of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

In the second we have a kind of baptism formula, again used in liturgy esp in baptism.
¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mainly we will look at the first of these readings. We often use this form of words as a kind of summary prayer after a meeting or to bring things to a close. But do we ever think of the depth of meaning and experience in it?

Note Paul's order is different from that of Jesus. **Christ, God, Holy Spirit**. Usually when asked who are the members of the Trinity we would say Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And that is indeed the order that we have in the Gospel where Jesus is reported as saying
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Any significance?

Probably not. Paul has prefaced his 'grace' with
*And the God of love and **peace** will be with you*

Lets look at Paul's in more detail.

1. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What does the word **grace** mean? Go back to earlier in the letter.

Ch 8 v 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

The **grace** we have here is about Jesus winning for us a **way back** to God, through his humiliation and death for us.

GRACE= God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Grace.

This is God become man. God in human form. 'Veiled in flesh the Godhead see' 'pleased as man with man to dwell Jesus our Immanuel' (God with us).

All of this is summed up in the word Grace. That's where our Christian life begins by coming to the cross and turning to Christ, the God-Man, so we can enjoy all of God's riches ourselves.

That's Grace. That's where Paul begins!

The Greek word translated grace is the lovely word **Charis**. Sometimes, like Grace, a girl's name.

2. Next he says 'The love of God'.

The **grace** of Jesus stems from the **love** of God. God loves us. Simon said on his last Sunday that he only has one sermon (true!) and it is that God loves us. God wants us back, he wants to forgive us and bring us to everlasting life with him. God offers forgiveness and salvation through Christ. The only way. **God is Love.**

A few weeks ago I was invited to join the most important and influence ministerial group within the diocese. **The diocese golf society**. I am now the youngest member. I was chatting with a retired priest called John whom I noted had been to the same university, but a few years before. He told me very movingly about his conversion 50 years ago and his immediate call to the Anglican ministry. His tradition is very different from mine; a high, catholic Anglican.

We think of conversion as being a Billy Graham type thing and often it is but for him as he explained it was **a sudden realization of the depth of God's love for him** out of the blue! 50 years on he still talks about it. The love of God. God loves us. That's our starting point.

So we have (a) God's love, and (b) G.R.A.C.E., the grace of JC.

3. Finally fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

What might that mean? The word translated as fellowship is the famous Greek word koinonia. It has the sense of 'participation', 'inclusion' 'being with'. The Holy Spirit is God today; with and indeed inside Christians. 'The Lord, the giver of life' as we sometimes say in the creed.

So we have this fuller understanding of God:

- God = sovereign, creator, father.
- Jesus = God incarnate (made flesh) living for a time with people as a person. But just for a time. He is now with God in heaven, but still, as we saw earlier, working on our behalf. *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,^{1e1} Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*
- But since Pentecost God and Jesus have been **with us and in us** in the form of God the HS. The HS **universalizes** the presence of Christ, who was on earth just briefly securing the opportunity of salvation through his life and death. The HS makes it all real on a day to day basis. The *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. A great deals flows from this indwelling fellowship. Absolutely crucially it is the HS who helps us understand and apply God's Word as we read it and thereby grow in our faith. Let me quote to you from '**Word and Spirit the Vital Partnership**' a book I was reading on holiday. **READ**

So the Trinity God, God=Father, God=Son, God=HS.

One God of course but **understood, approached, responded to** as three persons.

Nicky Gumble book -If any of the issues raised have affected you.....

But the HS does speak to us as we read his word and hear it, again in his wisdom, explained. Do take a copy and stay in touch.