

St Marc, Grenoble
Sunday 4th June 2023
Trinity Sunday
2 Corinthians 13: 11 - 13
Matthew 28: 16 - 20
'Go - and Make Disciples'

Good Morning, welcome to everyone here in Church and those joining by Zoom

Let's Pray

What day is it in the Church Calendar today? ... Yes, it is Trinity Sunday

Two really short readings this morning, probably the two shortest readings we've had this year, which at first glance, seemed a bit odd to me for Trinity Sunday, one of the great Festivals of the Church, when we celebrate the awesomeness of our God!

On reflection, perhaps I 'get it'! But I wonder what may have jumped out at you, as we heard them read? ... Thank you!

Before we delve further into these readings, I want to ask a question - for you to reflect on, as we explore them: 'How is your faith today?'

Both these readings are the end or conclusion of the book or letter they are in - they both contain farewell words, injunctions and encouragements.

The first is Paul's 'farewell' to the young church in Corinth, at the end of what we know as his 2nd letter to the Corinthians (although it seems highly possible there were other letters, which may have been 'lost') and his 'farewell advice' to them on how to care for and strengthen each other. It appears there had been serious disagreement between him and them, and that he was no longer as highly respected as he once had been.

He says: 'Put everything in order, strengthen one another and be at peace with one another - if you do, the God of love and peace will be with you'. It seems that they really needed this encouraging promise of peace.

The reading from the end of Matthew's Gospel is even more powerful. Jesus was meeting His disciples for the final time on earth, and commissioning them (before His ascension, to return to His Father, which is not recorded in Matthew's Gospel) to continue to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world, making more disciples and baptising them in 'The name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

Jesus instructed them to ensure that future disciples follow the rules of Life He has given, and He promised - to be with us every day until the end of the age. That's a life-changing promise for us all to claim, and give thanks for, every day of our lives.

But, I find people often struggle with understanding the unique reality of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit - One God?

Personally, not being very academic, I often feel we try to make our understanding and explanations of our awesome God far too theoretical and complicated!

When I was at theological college, it was fashionable to refer to our God as the 'Triune' God.

(Norman Warren: Trinity like a torch, bulb, battery + case - only work with each other.)

We worship a wonderful, multifaceted and unfathomable God; who is the perfect model of a loving community, and who is perfectly able and willing to care for all our needs, as we try to honour and obey Him throughout our lives.

And - when our time on earth comes to an end, He promises eternal life, worshipping Him face to face, and delighting, or basking, in His amazing glory.

God the Father - the Almighty, sent His only Son, Jesus Christ to live on earth for a season, to be a model or example, and a guide to living life worshipping the Father.

Through His own personal sacrifice, Jesus has already redeemed our fractured relationships with the Father, conquering once for all, the powers of death and evil.

After He was crucified, we're told Jesus rose again and ascended or returned to His rightful place, with His Father, (Our Father in Heaven); and Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our guardian, our advisor and lifelong support, as we endeavour to live our lives obeying His commission. That is a life changing promise. Will you accept it?

I come back to my earlier question: 'How is your faith today?'

The disciples had the privilege of face to face, living evidence of the Risen Lord! They saw Jesus with their own eyes – even then we are told, "Some doubted, or hesitated" What a delightful throw away comment that is! But, can you blame them?

Jesus made quite sure they understood the reality of His resurrection; and, then, the unequivocal authority under which He was operating: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."

Those are not the words of someone who, as some people try to suggest, was simply recovering from a near death experience, having been crucified, and whose severely injured body had been recovered from a stone cold tomb! They are, actually, words only fitting for the risen Son of God, himself!

Then, with a wonderfully direct opening: 'Therefore' (Or in our translation) 'So you must ... go' Jesus gave His disciples an ongoing 'Mission statement' together with its 'sell by date'! ('the very end of the age' - in other words, it's valid as long as we are here to read it!)

Jesus detailed the response He expects to His commission, by giving three clear action points – if you like, His 'Action Plan' or 'Mission Statement'. He said:

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- Go and make disciples of all nations. Actually, the original language gives a modern meaning more like: "Wherever you go, or as you go!"
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- Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
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- Incidentally, that's apparently considered by some scholars to be the most authoritatively Trinitarian statement in the whole New Testament.

Teach them, to obey everything I have commanded you.

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- Disciples are not taught simply by listening. The whole concept of discipleship is much more like an apprenticeship or a french 'stage'.
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- In the early church, new disciples learned more about the Christian faith by doing the things Jesus had taught His disciples, in the fellowship and company of other Christians. We all need to get involved to fully learn these things.

Finally, Jesus gave all of His disciples a wonderfully supportive promise:

"And look, I am with you, every single day, to the very end of the age."

What else can we possibly need, as we learn to serve our God - the Three in One?
Let's begin our apprenticeship right now! ...

As I close let's PRAY - and ask our Father God, to encourage and guide us, in the challenge of sharing our faith.

Come Holy Spirit ... **Amen**