



The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 48: Sunday 30th May 2021



Trinity
SUNDAY

Dear Friends,

An electrical inspection recently took place in our home as the Manses in which Methodist Ministers live are being checked out as part of new government regulations.

I'm pleased to say that all was safe and well, although, as one might expect with the passage of time since the house was built, there were some recommendations made for potential improvements. The electrician who carried out the inspection was friendly and efficient, but, at one point when we were in conversation, he started to explain one particular issue using technical electrician's language and I didn't understand what he was saying. It was a reminder that there is a whole world of electrical theory and knowledge which is a mystery to me. My understanding of the electrical system in the house is based on

straightforward experience. I turn the switch and (most of the time at least) a light goes on. I don't need a full understanding of electrical theory to experience what electricity can helpfully do.



Today is Trinity Sunday. To talk about God as being 'One in Three and Three in One' can seem to be a form of technical language that it is difficult to understand. However, all of us can encounter the reality of the Trinity in our own experience. We can look around and see the creative work of God the Father. We can reflect on the message of the cross and encounter the forgiving love of God the Son. We can open ourselves in prayer and know the transforming and renewing power of God the Holy Spirit.

We don't need to understand electrical theory to experience the reality of light when we turn on a switch. Similarly, even if we find it difficult to understand the ways in which the Trinity is described, we can still experience the God who creates, forgives and empowers.

Yours in His service

Chris Blake

Worship Reflection

Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. (Psalm 30 v 4)

Hymn (StF 11)

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!

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, that we can relate to you in different ways: as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer and Counsellor.
A God above, alongside, yet within us,

Remind us that knowing you involves a personal encounter and living experience, touching every part of who and what we are, each and every day.
Amen.

Bible Reading (John 3 v 1-17)

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

³ Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." ⁴ "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰ “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Reflection

The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is full of significant spiritual insights. Jesus talks to Nicodemus and speaks about the Kingdom of God and of the work of the Holy Spirit. The word Trinity is not used in this conversation (and indeed the word did not begin to be used to describe God until the third century) but it is clear from what Jesus says that His own ministry is closely linked with the work of the Father and the power of the Spirit.

Early in the conversation Jesus speaks about the need to be ‘born again’, and towards the end of the verses included above we find the powerful words recorded in verse 16, **‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’.**



These are powerful and important words and they will have given Nicodemus much to think about. We are not told in this chapter how Nicodemus responded to the words of Jesus, but interestingly Nicodemus does appear on two further occasions in John’s Gospel. At the end of John Chapter 7 (verses 50-52), Nicodemus stands up for Jesus against the other Jewish leaders and argues that they should listen to Jesus before they condemn Him, and then in Chapter 19 verses 38 - 42 we can read how Nicodemus goes with Joseph of Arimathea to care for the body of Jesus after the crucifixion. Nicodemus clearly went away a changed man after this conversation with Jesus.

Today we are invited to reflect on that same conversation and on what it reveals about the relationships between Jesus, God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Like Nicodemus we are invited to be ‘born again’ and to remember that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. This was Good News for Nicodemus and it is Good News for us all!

Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- That the ceasefire in the ‘Land of the Holy One’ will hold and that meaningful conversations will begin
- That all who work in the NHS and the care sector may find time for rest and renewal over the summer months.

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

Hymn (StF29)

Jesus, lead us to the Father,
by your Spirit, help us draw near.
As we come with awe and gladness,
help us draw near.
Alleluia, alleluia, help us draw near.

Final Prayer: Loving God, equip us through the inner presence of your Holy Spirit, enrich us through the redeeming grace of Christ, and encourage us through the daily experience of your Fatherly love. Strengthen our service, deepen our faith and increase our commitment so that we may live to your praise and glory. Amen

Gathered worship: Sunday 30th May

It was good to share with the gathered congregations at Aldershot and North Camp last Sunday, meeting in their church buildings for the first time since the most recent lockdown. It was good to meet together on Pentecost Sunday to celebrate this ‘new beginning’ in the life of the followers of Jesus in our local communities. Looking ahead, it is planned that worship will continue each Sunday in both churches with the service beginning in each church at 10.30 a.m. At the moment there is no singing, and we are still required to wear masks and socially distance – but booking is not required, so do come along if you feel able to do so.

Bible Readings: © Biblica 2011. Some prayers taken from “2000 prayers for public worship” by Nick Fawcett. CCLI No 000295.