**4 June 2023 2 Corinthians 13 : 11-14, Matthew 28: 16-20 Rev Lin Vawer**

Its Trinity Sunday, the tricky one to preach, the one where you often get a guest speaker and you’ve got me.

It’s Trinity Sunday, so that means we hear the only verse in the Bible where Jesus refers to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Maybe instead of getting caught up in trying to explain the Trinity, we should call this Great Commission Sunday! I mean, last week was Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit arrived with a whoosh and with fire and gave birth to the church. It makes sense that a week later, the church would get its marching orders -

*“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”*

Jesus also makes a promise, a promise reminding us how none of this is possible if we try to do it in our own strength.

*“Remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age,”*

It is a reminder of our experience of Pentecost when the disciples receive a command, then are filled with the power of the spirit so that they can implement Jeus achievement and then given the gift of peace in order to get on with the job.

But there is also another a really important piece of information we may have missed as we hurried over familiar words on our way to going, making, baptizing, and teaching new disciples. Matthew tells us, *“When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted”.*

Some doubted, or maybe *all* doubted *to some extent*. Either way, worship and doubt are inextricably linked here. They worshiped. And at least some of them doubted. They weren’t sure if they could trust the one, they were worshipping, but they worshiped anyway. And they doubted.

Maybe he mentions the doubt as a way to encourage us when our own faith is too small to live out the gospel. We aren’t alone when it comes to doubt, Even the closest followers of Jesus had their moments when they just weren’t sure.

But I think too that Matthew is reminding us that doubt is an integral part of faith. Someone once said that the opposite of faith isn’t doubt or fear; it’s certainty. You see, when we are certain of something, we don’t really need faith. When we are sure in our own minds, we don’t really need to trust anyone else.

Doubt makes us vulnerable to grace. Doubt opens us up to the possibility that there is someone we *can* trust, and trusting in the face of our doubt is what faith really means. Trusting in the face of our doubt is what following Jesus really means. Helping others learn to trust Jesus in the face of their own doubt – that’s making disciples.

Then there’s the promise, and it’s a promise reminding us how none of this is possible if we try to do it in our own strength. “*Remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*,” Jesus is with us. Making disciples of Jesus Christ is not something we do under our own authority; we do it under his. And he promises to be with us in every circumstance. Even in our doubt. When we aren’t sure where to place our trust, we can trust in Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, will be with us.

So, this is Trinity Sunday, and it can be a heady discussion to talk about the trinity, throughout history it is apparent that it’s not an easy doctrine to nail down. There is a ton of mystery that surround the person /persons of God and while some seem entirely clear about it, others are confused, others choose to ignore it. After all, if you’re feeling really poorly, or you’re a parent trying to deal with a wayward teenager, or someone who has lost their job does it really matter that Gods is Father, Son and Holy Spirit? All they want to know is that God is God and somehow, he knows who they are, where they are, what they are doing and what they need.

Do we need a Trinity Sunday – after all it doesn’t hold a candle to Christmas or Easter. It doesn’t get a lot of press, maybe because it is so confusing. But let’s turn that thought on its head and ask what id there were no trinity? Jesus commission says to baptise in the name of *the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* what if we baptised only in the name of the Father?

Besides sounding awkward it would deny the work and person of Christ and the ongoing activity of the Spirit. It would not be a full picture of who God is, we would be immersed in a very powerful, mysterious but detached God that could lead us into a very ill-defined belief.

What if we baptised only in the name of the Jesus? “I baptise you in the name of Jesus. Amen”. That would miss the person of “God the Father, Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth” that part of God that is bigger than anything we can understand and is beyond our logic and reason. It also would miss the Holy Spirit, the ongoing of presence with God today.

What if we only said “I baptise you in the name of the Holy Spirit” what is missing is the awesome creativity of God the Father and the redemptive work of Jesus, who is God in human flesh. We would miss the part of God who rose from the dead to overcome our sinfulness. We don’t want to miss that out!

According to Jesus we cannot go out into the world to make disciples without all of it – Father, Son, Holy Spirit. We are immersed (or sprinkled) with the whole being of God whether we understand it or not. We are not powerless in the world, we are not disconnected for the omnipotent God as creator, or from the redeeming work of God in human flesh, or from the very presence of the same God in the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and among and sometimes outside of us. It is a tremendous gift for all of us to celebrate but particularly if you are sat there feeling isolated, alone, angry, depressed, grieving, hopeless, fearful, anxious or tired.

Whatever we call it Command or Great commission, Jesus words remain the same*:* Go into all the world. Make disciples of all the people. Baptize all of them and teach them all the things I’ve taught you. It is the mission statement of the church and its tricky and we can’t do it without the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes we focus on the “Go” part of Christ’s words. Get off your stuff, get moving, get out there and introduce people to Jesus! You might be surprised to learn that “Go” isn’t the main verb in the Great Commission. Making disciples is the imperative in the Great Commission. The going, baptizing, and teaching are all *elements* of disciple-making, but making disciples is the primary task Christ gives the church.

Making disciples does not mean coercing people or forcing them into ‘right belief’. Disciples are like students – practising under supervision, asking questions, making mistakes and learning from them. We are all disciples and it is our role to draw others to the student role, into a lifelong learning process.

Making disciples of Christ and immersion into the fullness of God, the holy Trinity go hand in hand. We cannot make ourselves or anyone else disciples without the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is dependent on who Jesus was and is. Jesus keeps pointing us to the father and there lies the power of the trinity, the fullness, the oneness of God.

*“I am with you always”* the promise that reminds *us* that none of this is possible if we try to do it in our own strength. We are under Jesus’ authority to make disciples and he promises to be with us in every circumstance, even when we doubt.

May be Trinity Sunday ought to be a bigger deal. It sits there silently in the liturgical calendar, offering us the entire being of God in a relationship that we do not deserve but can celebrate having. It is the day to celebrate the one to whom we belong, and by whose grace we serve.

Keep that in mind as we say together the words of St Paul

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

Amen