

Fullness

Lord's Prayer: Rooted & Grounded in Love

Palm Sunday

It's Palm Sunday.

All get up and go outside into the Courtyard.

It's a symbol of Christ together with all his followers outside the gate in Jerusalem getting ready for the week of all weeks, leading up to Maude Thursday, the night before Jesus' death. Good Friday, Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion and resurrection.

The drama is about to begin. This weeklong pilgrimage into a personal experience with Jesus of His rejection, crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

I'm going to say these words...

"Blessed is the One who comes in the Name of the Lord."

And you will respond with...

"Hosanna in the Highest Heaven."

Imagine yourself there with the crowd at the gate of Jerusalem greeting Jesus as He enters the city.

Rob and Andrea Read Matthew 21:1-11

And when He entered Jerusalem, the entire city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"

As we enter into worship this morning we are given the opportunity to answer this same question. From our hearts.

"Who is this?"

Is He your friend?

Is Jesus your leader? Forgiver?

Lord?

The Lover of your soul?

Lord, Liar or Lunatic?

Sure we can answer the question in our head, but we are called to answer the question from our hearts.

Pray

Let's go inside and enter into worship.

Worship / Lynette

The amazing thing in this story was as soon as they came into the city, people saw a side to Jesus that they weren't expecting.

They had it in their minds that Jesus, this newly declared King and Messiah would usher in a rebellion that would rescue Israel from the rule and tyranny of the Romans.

You have this picture of Nero's successor, his son, in his tower in Bethlehem, watching this procession of a king approaching Jerusalem, getting ready to crush the rebellion, and what does Jesus do?

He goes into the temple and turns over the money changers tables.

“My house will be called a house of prayer but you have made it into a den of thieves.”

Even before they enter the city gate Jesus does something not becoming of their Messiah.

He weeps over Jerusalem. He weeps.

He weeps over their deaf ears and cold hearts. He weeps over the coming rebellion of 70 AD, and he weeps over the fact they did not accept their opportunity for salvation through Jesus (Luke 19).

Jesus didn't turn out to be whom they expected Him to be; so they turned on Him.

What began as a worship service quickly turned into a trial and a crucifixion.

They thought they were welcoming a king who would overthrow the Roman yoke and set up another kingdom – the Kingdom of David.

But they were soon disappointed.

The courtyard that was once filled with “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest”, quickly changed to shouts of a different kind.

Read Matthew 27:15-26

This is a reminder of just how fickle we truly are. How it was our sin that nailed him to the cross. Their shouts represent a very real part of our own hearts.

We come to Him this morning desperate and grateful for His grace in our lives.

Worship / Lynette

Prayer

Teach / Darcy

Show clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKikHxKeodA>

I don't know if you saw this clip this week.

My first response when I saw it was that it was an analogy of a woman's heart.

My text to Kenda was this...

A beautiful picture of your heart honey! So much mystery, and beauty and depth. Makes me wonder what else there is yet to discover.

Don't get me wrong. Don't think I am the perfect husband, who never tires of pursuing his wife; just like you I need simple reminders like this one to keep on discovering, to never get lazy when it comes to love.

But just like most things, we can see an image like this that leaves us awestruck at the beauty and craftsmanship of such a piece.

But on another level it can speak to us about the deeper things in life like love and relationship with one another; a picture of someone's soul.

But it can also point to God. The ultimate love. The ultimate relationship through which all relationships find their existence and purpose.

I see this piece and I realize again just the vast wonder there is to God. Just when you think you have discovered all there is to know of God, by His Spirit He opens our eyes and hearts to discover more.

Eph. 3: 18 says, *“And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.”*

If this is a picture of God, and His mystery and depth and beauty, it makes me realize just how much more there is to discover and explore and experience.

Thing is we get lazy in pursuing. We get content.

Rather than see God as a piece so beautiful as this, we settle for something so much less.

Like some desk from IKEA.

It serves its purpose. It's good enough. It's functional.

I have to confess; I think our view of God needs to be expanded. Magnified.

We need to toss the IKEA desk for something like this.

I found myself in prayer on Thursday morning, confessing this very thing.

How meager my depth of experience is of God. The reason I am so easily distracted by the lesser things in life is because I have not been captivated by just how vast and rich and majestic God is.

CS Lewis once said *“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”*

We need God's Spirit to give us the desire-to-desire more.

When I think about plumbing the depths of God's beauty and mystery and depth I think about the Trinity.

The idea that at the very center of the universe is relationship. The center of the universe is community. And it's out of this relationship that you and I were created and redeemed. And the center of this reality is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.”
1 Cor. 2:9

As you know Thursday was St Patrick's Day.

St Patrick is the foremost patron Saint of Ireland.

March 17th 461 AD was the traditional date when St Patrick died.

He brought the Good News of Jesus to Ireland.

One of the things pretty cool about St Patrick was that he used the three-leaved shamrock or clover to explain the Trinity to the Irish.

And the even more beautiful reality that in Christ, and through His work on the cross, you and I are invited into that three-fold relationship.

A little side note, after the 40 day Lenten fast, the Irish, particularly the men had a custom. They would all go to the nearest Tavern and drink far too much.

Something they called "drowning the Shamrock."

So true isn't it? Anything that would serve to drown the trinity, smother, stifle, or grieve the father, Son and Spirit in our lives is getting hammered.

Eph. 5:18 says, "Don't be drunk with wine – or Guinness – because that will only ruin your life. Instead be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Again, so captivated by lesser things.

Prayer

We have been talking about the Hallowed nature of God. Hallowed be your name, in my heart as it is in heaven.

What does it mean for His name to be made hallowed in our own hearts?

Reminds me of Tozer's prayer.

"O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need for further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long."

— **A.W. Tozer**

Back to the mystery of the Trinity. It is so vast, so incomprehensible, that it captivates us; draws us into all that He is.

The Christian faith is full of paradoxes.

What's a paradox?

A paradox is a statement that doesn't seem to make sense; initially it seems like a contradiction but when understood, makes a lot of sense. In fact, a paradox says something that couldn't be said as well any other way.

Jesus made some paradoxical statements. He did so to draw

the attention of His listeners, who then had to think about what He had said. The Apostle Paul did the same.

Consider the following paradoxes:

WE FIND BY LOSING

WE RECEIVE BY GIVING

WE ARE EXALTED BY BEING HUMBLE

WE BECOME GREAT BY BECOMING SMALL

OUR WEAKNESS IS OUR STRENGTH

Become poor to become rich

Become the least to be the greatest

Must work to rest; and rest to work

Sovereignty & Free Will

Christ's Divinity & Humanity

Christ's burden is both light and hard.

- Rich young ruler went away sad
- For the religious the burden is easy and light
-

God comes to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted

And the big one...

The Trinity – The true God is one and three at the same time. Illogical? Yep. True? Yep.

Reminds me again of CS Lewis' comment on the Trinity.

"If Christianity was something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not. We cannot compete in simplicity with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing with fact. Of course anyone can be simple if he does not have any facts to bother about."

Remember, the doctrine of the Trinity are God's thoughts about God, not ours.

I think it's good we can't make sense of God. If I could make sense of just whom God is, He wouldn't be that significant.

But it's still good for us to grapple with hard things. Love God with our whole mind as well as our hearts.

Here's a question:

What Christian Dogma do you have to hold onto in order for you to be Christian?

- Virgin birth?
- Doctrine of heaven and hell?
- Gender issues?
- 7-Day Creation?
- Infallibility or inerrancy of scripture?

All are important doctrine in the Christian faith but there are many devout Christians who would differ on these doctrines.

So what are the two beliefs or doctrines that are more classified as dogmas? Those things that are non-negotiables?

- The doctrine of the Trinity
- Christology (Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, Glorification)

This is why Paul wrote in Romans 10:9 these words.

“Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Get this right and everything else falls into place.

Like I said last week, embrace Christ, as Lord and He will faithfully lead you to the heart of the Father and the Spirit.

This is why the doctrine of the trinity is so critical.

So when we don't believe Jesus is Lord, come in the flesh, is divine, died and rose from the dead, we fall into heresy.

If we don't believe in the Father, Son and Spirit, God three in one, we also fall into heresy.

Let me introduce you to another diagram created by Dr Roger Nicole of Gordon Conwell Seminary.

Draw Triangle on whiteboard

1. There is one God and only one.
2. This God exists eternally in three distinct persons.

3. The three persons are equally divine in essence and attributes.

So if you are a follower of Jesus you can put yourself in the centre of the circle.

You and I remain in the circle as long as we hold to all three sides of the triangle.

If you hold to just two sides, you slide to the corner. You fall out of the circle. You find yourself outside the circle. You end up in an unbiblical view of God. A view that doesn't line up with God's self-revelation.

Now this can get quite complicated, where we actually find ourselves if we hold to just two sides rather than all three.

To help explain this I want to pull in a little satire befitting of St Patrick.

Roll clip. St. Patrick's Bad Analogies

Before we move to some practical outcomes of this beautiful doctrine let's clear up a few key things.

The difference between two words, co-exist or subsist?

Do the three persons of the trinity co-exist alongside one another or subsist in the one divine essence?

To help you get your head wrapped around this let me use this illustration.

Water co-exists as liquid, solid, vapor; but it doesn't subsist as liquid, solid and vapor.

I co-exist with my wife Kenda and my 4 kids; but I subsist as a husband, father, brother, son, pastor etc.

The three in one of the Trinity do not exist alongside one another but subsist in eternal relatedness.

Now let's talk about in what way the persons are related to one another.

To help us understand this we need to look at the **Nicene Creed**.

**We believe in Jesus Christ
The only begotten Son of God
Begotten of the Father before all worlds
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
The Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

These words explain the uniqueness of each of the three persons of the trinity.

Father – we see the mutuality of the trinity, not hierarchy, but the Father is uniquely the Father in that He and only He is begotten of none and proceeds from none.

The Father is the First Person of the Trinity not because he is before or above the 2nd and 3rd in time and position, but he is the source.

Son- the 2nd person is uniquely the Son in that he and only he is begotten of the Father.

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.

What does this archaic word mean?

Here **CS Lewis** made this observation of the word begotten.

“To beget is to become the father of; to create is to make. When you beget you beget something of the same kind as yourself. A human begets human babies; a bird begets an egg, which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a human makes a radio, or a statue.”

So what God creates in Genesis is not God, but human. Just as what humans create is not human. What God begets is God, just as what humans beget is human.

This is why the one and only begotten Son of God is God.

My kids are of the same essence as their parents; they are begotten.

Jesus is of the same essence as His Father; therefore He is God. Not created like angels, but begotten.

John 1:1-5, 14, 16-18

Now for the Spirit

Just as the Son is eternally God, so is the Holy Spirit.

But the Spirit is not begotten but proceeds from God.

In the same way to be begotten doesn't mean to be created, so to, proceed also doesn't mean create.

What proceeds from God is God.

Many scholars describe procession or proceeds as divine breathing.

The picture here is that the Father and the Son eternally breathe, and that breath is the Holy Spirit.

Is it any surprise that the Bible's word for Holy Spirit literally means breath or wind?

Is it any wonder Jesus said to His disciples, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit."?

And then he breathed on them.

God's Spirit is the Life breath of God the Father, and God the Son.

We are as close as we can get through the work of Jesus.

You and I are invited into this circle.

Invited into the deepest mystery of His being. God as an intimate relationship. A fellowship. A community.

Augustine spent his whole Christian life reflecting on the Trinity.

He came to understand God the Father, Son and Spirit in terms of ...

What do you think it was?

Love.

The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father and the bond of love between the Father and the Son is the Spirit.

Wild.

At the centre of the universe is this relationship defined by love.

This is why David Benner's statement so resonates.

"Born out of the love of God, our very being is being-in-love, for our being is in God who is love. Love...is not merely one characteristic of God, but is God."

It's in this three-fold relationship of divine love that you and I live and move and find our being (Acts 17:28).

I like how **Darrel Johnson** puts it.

It's out of that love that God the Father created the world – and us in it – through the agency of the Son and the energy of the Spirit.

It is out of that love that God the Father sent the Son into the world to be born of the Virgin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is out of that love that God the Father handed over the Son, through the Spirit, to the cross, reconciling the world to Himself.

It is out of that love that God the Father sends the Spirit in the name of the Son to dwell within those whom the Son purchased for the Father.

From our creation, to our redemption, to our glorification, we participate in God's Trinitarian love.
I find that awesome.

That ushers me into praise and worship.
What an amazing God we serve.

So what's the implication?

So what does this mean for our every day lives?

1. We now know why when relationships go sour all life goes sour.

We are created in God's image and likeness. Relationship. Community. Fellowship.

So when we are out of fellowship. So when a break-up happens we find it so devastating.

This was never meant to happen.

Why when someone steps out of the circle, our hearts break.

Why loneliness is so devastating. It's not good for us to be

isolated and alone.

Gen 2:18 say It is not good for man to be alone.

Why? Because Adam will be lonely? Yes.

But more importantly because Adam alone is not Adam made in the image of God.

God is not a solitary God. Nor are we created to be solitary and isolated.

Why Satan has a hay-day in our lives when we are isolated.

The famous poet John Donne once said, "No man is an island."

We need relationship for us to be fully human.

It is because of the Trinity that loneliness is so crushing and that broken relationships are so debilitating, and that death is so painful.

This is why Jesus came. To make us right with God. To mend relationships. To teach us how to forgive. To be in right relationship.

2. Balance – balance between the father, Son and the Spirit.

Focus on one or two to the neglect of the other throws us off balance.

Balance board – too much weight on one side we fall over. We

lean too heavily on one side.

Most of us live off balance.

Some of us lean too heavily on the Father, to the neglect of Jesus and the Spirit.

Some have never even considered all the Spirit has to offer them.

Some are so heavy on the side of the Spirit we have totally neglected the Father and the Son.

The God who has claimed us for himself is Father, Son and Spirit. Not just Father. Not just Son. Not just Spirit.

Being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit means we press into the full reality of God's name; coming to enjoy all the full benefits of God the Father, Son and Spirit.

Embrace the full Trinitarian nature of God and our lives find balance.

3. Mutuality or Equality -

So let's take a look at this triangle again.

Is it standing up? Father at the top and the Son and the Spirit at the bottom?

Remember, Father comes before but is not above.

That would imply hierarchy in the Trinity.

If we believe Father is above the Son and the Son is above the Spirit; if you believe this, then you will believe in hierarchy in every other area of life.

No, let's lay this triangle down.

From the Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 AD we read this.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.

We don't see hierarchy but mutuality in the Trinity.

We see this dance between Father, Son and Spirit.

And where are we invited?

Into the centre.

This is why we all stand on level ground at the foot of the cross.

Mutuality in the Trinity, mutuality with one another.

If I believe in the hierarchy of the Trinity I will believe in hierarchy in every other facet of life.

- Men over women.
- Rich over poor.
- White over black.

- How we think and believe about the Trinity radically impacts how we view relationships.

How we view the opposite gender.

How we view sex.

How we see other ethnic groups. How we view the poor.

We are all equal in weakness and need for grace. No one better than the other. No one above the other, but all eye to eye. On level ground.

4. Fullness – to be baptized means to be immersed or drenched.

To be baptized in the name of the father, Son and Spirit means we have been given the privilege of participating in this Trinitarian community of love.

When we say yes to Jesus as Lord we are immersed into the love and life of God the Father.

We are immersed into the grace and truth of God the Son.

We are immersed into the power and purity of God the Spirit.

Most of us are not yet experiencing and appropriating all that was given to us in conversion.

We know something of the love and power of the Father.

We know something of the forgiveness and freedom of the Son.

We know something of the pervading and transforming glory of the Spirit.

We have yet to fully know the fullness of the Triune God.

Comes back to the elaborate desk – the analogy of all there is yet to be discovered in God, Father, Son and Spirit.

So much more to discover, uncover and experience.

So easy to get lazy in love. Get lazy in pursuing Him.

May God by His Spirit give us a desire to desire more.

Pray.