

Sermon for Sunday June 15th, 2025 at St. James Emily
Trinity Sunday Rev. Milton J Barry

Today I am not building or shaping a sermon around events in the Old Testament or even around the parables and teachings of Jesus.

I am beginning this morning with the Christian understanding of the mystery of God. I am re-introducing you to the mystery of the Trinity!

There is a tendency in our culture to break down religious experience into something that is less than mystery: something that is understood, manageable, and completely transparent: I suggest that if you have successfully achieved that – the removal of all mystery – you are living in a fool's paradise! In a fool's paradise there is no mystery and almost no humility. In that world, you know yourself and have pretty much figured out the nature and character of all other human beings. God operates like a fine-tuned machine and has no tolerance for any variation in the functioning of life and living.

That fool's paradise is NOT Christianity!

So let's meet Jesus. In Jesus we discover that the unknowable God has a face, a voice, and a name. God is no longer some aloof, abstract, philosophical principal. The Christian faith is all about Jesus.

It is the Christian conviction that Jesus was born into and raised in the Jewish world that believed in one God. This one God functioned like a fine parent, a father, who was not remote from human hopes and pains and struggles.

The Christian conviction is that in the person of Jesus we have and are seeing as much of God as we ever hope to see (in this life?). That is why we stand for the Gospel. It is as though Jesus has walked into our church and with joy and respect we rise to greet Him. The Gospel brings his life and actions and words into our very midst!

Now here is part of the mystery of God's nature.

Something of our Creator God is revealed in all of nature: from the miracle of the germination of seeds planted to the interdependence of all plants and animals and human activity – it is all connected!

Something of our Creator God is visible: first in the creativity and imagination of humans in music and art and literature, and then too in the outpouring of loving and sacrificial behaviour on behalf of others with no thought of reward!

But God's singular and most spectacular revelation is in Jesus. If you want to see God, look to Jesus.

When Jesus says to his disciples at the Last Supper: “I still have many things to say to you but you cannot hear them now”, is He not saying that their understanding of God's nature and purposes are much greater than they ever imagined previously?

Jesus is pushing that small group beyond everything they have ever imagined.

“When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth”.

If God is truly God, there is no end to what can be discovered, learned, and lived!

So the early Christians were emboldened not only by the resurrection of Jesus, but also by the power of an unseen inspiring Spirit. They did not yet have creeds or a written theology. They knew only this: that God brought into being all of life and desired to be connected to that life. The ancient Hebrew people saw this God as acting like a caring parent, and in their patriarchal culture, they called God 'Father'.

That God made promises: “I will not leave you alone. I will come and be with you”.

And so in a humble home, in a humble village, with poor and unassuming parents, the birth of Jesus occurred. In him was to be found the whole nature of God and he would give to us, in word and deed, a way of living, just as the Creator always intended.

That same Jesus was not a gift given to one people or one nation. Upon his ascension into heaven, He became available to ALL people and ALL nations.

And still God did not remain remote. God's powerful presence was felt deeply – it felt as though Jesus had never left!

And there it is, the beginning of a creed and a theology – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God. A Trinity of experience of the One God. What I now prefer to call 'Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Over the centuries the Church has given a name to this experience of the one God, and that name is 'Trinity':

- God creating
- God restoring and redeeming human life by the life of Jesus
- God guiding and inspiring by the Holy Spirit

And so we sing and pray “Breathe on me breath of God” and enable me to follow Jesus and to rest in the Creator's embrace of love!

Thanks be to God!