

Trinity Sunday 070620

Grace, Love and Communion

I have managed to do a lot of reading this year- something I love to do. In one of the books I read over the weekend there was a phrase that comes to mind when I think about grace.

'Forgive me Father for I have sinned' are the words used at the beginning of the sacrament of confession in the Catholic Church. In the context of the Catholic Church, Father refers to the Priest but for us it has a very different meaning. A few weeks ago we had a reading which spoke of Jesus praying for the disciples. He used the word Father when he was praying. Each week in our worship we use the term Our Father, when we begin to pray the Lord's Prayer. Yet there is something more than the use of the word Father.

'Forgive me Father for I have sinned' are words of being sorry, words of contrition. And in saying such words there is a desire to be forgiven. For the relationship with God to be restored. Perhaps the priest hearing the confession is then able to give a penance or 'punishment' which can then lead the person to be restored to other people who may have been hurt.

These words though are most meaningful when the response is one of grace. Grace can be seen as goodwill from one person to another. In the Christian sense it is the goodwill from God revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. You see Jesus, in his suffering and death, provided the grace we need to be forgiven and restored in our relationship with God. Jesus is the person of grace that we all need.

So there is no surprise when we read in 2 Corinthians 13 these words:

*May the **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, the **love** of God and the **communion** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

These are familiar words if you have been around church. Yet so often we say them without really thinking about them.



There is a connection though. The grace of Jesus comes because of God's love for us. Most of us know the verse from John 3: 16- *For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that whoever believed in him would have eternal life.* We forget the next verse, verse 17 *For God did not send his son into the world to be its judge but to be its saviour.*

Being saved or salvation are about grace. Grace is even when we do wrong, out of love, God can save us. Through Jesus' grace, we are saved.

I think it is important to remember that we are not saved on our own. God brings us into community with each other. God's Spirit brings us to a place where together we are stronger. Together we can support each other, pray for each other, serve each other and love each other. Communion is not just a meal that is shared, but it the way we share our loves with each other.

In this blessing we see the way God comes to us in love, in grace and in communion, drawing us closer to each other and closer to God. Here we are reminded of the 3 persons of God- what we call the trinity.

This is also seen in the reading from the gospel of Matthew. Here Jesus has gathered his disciples in the Mount of Olives, where had prayed, where he had been transfigured and where his time on earth was soon to finish. He spoke of sending them out- to the ends of the earth and they had a job to do. They were to make disciples baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Here we have what is called the great commission- a task that every one of us has been called to. Yet how can we 'make' disciples? It is not as easy as making bread. Yet we are called to do this. Perhaps it is in the way we live our lives that others see how we act, what we say and how we engage with people. Perhaps it is telling them about our experiences of God- in ordinary and everyday ways. Perhaps it is showing people the love of God, the grace of Jesus and what it is like to be in communion with the Holy Spirit and with each other. Perhaps it is something that we need to keep trying to do as we grow in our own discipleship- in following Jesus.



I am reminded of an apprentice. They watch what the skilled person does, they learn about it, they study, they watch and in time they work with the skilled person as they try and do the task. The more they practice, the fewer mistakes they make, yet they keep trying.

Discipleship is a little like that. The God we follow- One God who we know in different ways- has come to earth in the person of Jesus. His life shows us how to act, how to care and how to love. Just as he studied scriptures- so can we. Just as he

worshipped and prayed and spent time with God- who he called Father- so can we. Just as he gathered his disciples together and taught them and shared meals with them and travelled with them- so can we.

It is not easy to understand or explain the trinity, but we do know and can experience the grace of God, the love of God and the presence of God in our lives. One God revealed in 3 persons- yet with us, in us and around us always.

During this week and the coming weeks, I pray you might have a greater experience of God.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and every day.