

'LENT  
for OUR  
EVERYDAY'

Spending time in the Creeds

Week 2

## Week 2

### God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Apostles Creed is broken into 3 distinct sections each headed up with a declaration to be made about God:

I believe in God, the Father almighty ...

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord ...

I believe in the Holy Spirit ...

In your exercise of cutting up and placing in one of three piles each sentence I wonder which pile each of these sentences ended up. Time to be honest, after all this is Lent, did you place them all into pile number 1 (I am happy with these) but you did so with little thought for what each is really saying about God, and about our relationship to that God?

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ draws us into a belief that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The earliest Christians tried to make sense of what had happened in Jesus. They became convinced that, in Jesus, we encounter not just a message about God but the activity and presence of God himself.

They discovered too that God's activity and presence is not gone from us when earthly Jesus ascends to the Father. Instead, the presence of God comes to all who gather to worship and honour the Father, through the Son: in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit (the breath, or wind of God).

With the early Christians, we look today at Jesus, at God taking flesh and dwelling among us. At the heart of what we see is this relationship of love, trust and united purpose between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God has a single nature and purpose; which is expressed and experienced in the three persons that humanity is able to relate with. The Father entrusts the work of the kingdom to the Son. The Holy Spirit builds the fruits of the kingdom in the Son's community, the

Church. This community is called by the Son to call God Father, as he does himself. In so doing we then enter into a familial relationship where Jesus is our brother as we are the adopted sons and daughters of the Father. All is bound together by the life giving Spirit of God.

This is important for the terms 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' are not proper names or descriptions of functions but terms that describe relationships. The persons of the Trinity are not interchangeable but nor do they 'do' different things: simply, the Father is the Father of the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the love that makes God three and one.

It is only because we know that God is Trinity that we can say that God is love. It is not that God simply acts lovingly, but that God is actually love and we see this expressed in the very being of God where Father, Son and Holy Spirit are inter-related in a self-giving expression of love.

Ok, time for a breather; like any complex dance it is easy to get dizzy in thinking this through. So let's stop and be still and maybe take some time to pray, to converse with God. You might like to try some words beginning with 'dear God', then 'Heavenly Father', or 'Jesus Christ', and maybe 'Holy Spirit'. Remember, which ever words we use we are holding a conversation with the one God!

*Moving on, going deeper!*

For the new community of Christ, His church, God experienced as Trinity was both shockingly new and yet characteristic of the God already revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament). If you are finding some of this surprising, then you are in good company!

We find through the Scriptures God experienced as above all things; through the creation. We find God with the people through the presence of His Spirit. We also find God promised to come in a radical loving manner through His Messiah, God with us, Emmanuel. It should have been no surprise when Jesus was born, but it seems to have been so to most folks. Here was God with us, with the Holy

Spirit come to Him and with the God above declaring 'this is my Son in whom I am well pleased'.

Look again to your 3 sentences, I wonder if they should be one sentence and not three. We would then say, 'I believe in God, the Father almighty, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, and the Holy Spirit.'

However, might this simply leave things as a statement of faith or fact rather than a declaration of the nature of God we find ourselves related to? Might this then open a chink of a window on what the Creeds give to us? Might it be that the words we say invite us to step into an active relationship with the Father who is creator, with the Son who is our redeemer, and the Holy Spirit who gives to us all life?

The Week ahead.

Through the week spend time looking at your relationship with God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Which person do you warm to the most? Which person do you feel less related to, ask yourself why? You may like to try splitting the day into three and when you pray in the morning do so addressing 'Father'. In the afternoon direct your prayers to Jesus the Son. And in the evening direct you prayers to the Holy Spirit.

Each day recite this declaration of faith based on Ephesians 3:

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named. We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love. We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high. We believe in one

God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Amen.