



““The life of the Trinity actually comes to life in the church? How?”

First of all, Jesus came to bring the life of the Trinity to life in himself. We get a jolly good peek, therefore, into how God operates as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the human life of Jesus. We see God actually come to life in human terms in him.

So, why, then, did Jesus create a church too, or why the need for a church as well when he'd already illustrated the life of God in his own human life?

Because the life of the Trinity is now meant to come to life in our human lives too. Every large or little cell group in Jesus' church is now the means by which others see the life of the Trinity "come to life."

Jesus made that clear in his John 17 prayer to his Father. First he says to the Father in verse 6, "I have revealed you to those (disciples) whom you gave me out of the world," and in verse 7, "Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you," because everything Jesus said and did was a perfect illustration of his Father and their life together. And Jesus' first disciples eventually got that (verse 8).

Now it was their turn to illustrate the life of God as Father and Son, verse 11, so "they (my disciples) may be one as we (Father and Son) are one," as Jesus phrased it. In the disciples now the life and relationship of the Father and Son would come to life. And the way that would be done, verse 17, would be the Father "sanctifying them by the truth," the same truth God had revealed about himself through Jesus. The lives of Jesus' disciples, therefore, would now be "sanctified" or set apart for the same purpose as Jesus' life, to reveal life as God lives it.

This is why Jesus sanctified himself (verse 19), or set apart his own life as a human, to make the life of the Trinity come alive so that his disciples would be perfectly set up for the same thing happening in their lives. His disciples would gradually come to see this is why the Father had sent him, first to illustrate the life of the Trinity through Jesus' life, and secondly to follow that up through his disciples illustrating the life of the Trinity in their lives together in the church (verses 20-23).

And I get that too, but how does it play out in our large and little churches today?

Well, it's clearly not by anything that I do on my own human initiative or strength, because Jesus finishes off his John 17 prayer where he began it back in verse 6, when he says in verse 26, "I have made you known to them," but then he says, "and I will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them," meaning it's the Father's love, not our own love, that illustrates the life of the Trinity. That's because we can't do what we've been called as the church to do, which Jesus obviously knew as well when he then says, "and that I myself may be in them."

That is such a huge relief hearing him say that, at least it is for me, because I'm not a naturally loving person, thanks to all twelve years of my childhood being spent in loveless English boarding schools. I've grown up preferring dogs to people. But here I have Jesus' great wish and prayer for me that he'll live his life of love in me. He can and will, therefore, bring to life the truth of what God is as Father, Son and Holy Spirit for me, as well as in me.

And I've seen that in how ever so gradually my life as a minister has been changing from simply teaching the Bible as my paid duty in a denomination to finding myself totally committed to two tiny churches seven years beyond my retirement age. But it's worth every minute, because what if we experience and demonstrate the life of the Trinity so well that "the world may (also) believe that the Father sent Jesus" in verse 21? In other words, people outside our cell groups also see in us why the Father sent Jesus, as they see the love the Father has for his Son lived out in us, and therefore the love the Father will now live in them too, so they can share in it just as we have.

So what God is making possible through our little gatherings of Christians is remarkable. And to think that my children and grandchildren can see it too, through the life of the Trinity coming to life in me and the Christian group I'm part of.

It's certainly concentrated my life on God making all this real, in my old age too, because Jesus did pray in John 17 that his disciples would have an impact, and on that I depend.

(P.S. Check out the 'Online sermons,' Colin Lauchlan, June 7, 2020, on the left hand side of this website. It was his sermon that stirred this One to One).