

## Trinity Sunday 2018

What's God?

Well first, perhaps, God is power. He is the power of the Big Bang; He is the shoot of grass thrusting up through the earth, He is the new born baby's cry. He is the Power of Life, always surging, always fresh. As the hymn puts it, 'in all life thou livest, the true life of all'. God is the power that makes things, that lets things be. God is awesome power.

And the Bible says that just as much as God is Power, God is Love. The Big Bang doesn't care about you. The universe, in all its grandeur, does not number the hairs upon your head, or carry your name graven on its heart. The universe, considered in itself, doesn't even *have* a heart. But the Bible says that the Power which made all things most definitely does. And He – not it – *He* made the world out of love: He made *you* out of love. You exist because you are wanted, from the very beginning. God wants you. God is fierce, fierce Love.

Power, and Love - and Goodness. What God longs for is the you he made, the you free from all distortions and flaws and gone-wrongness. He longs for you free from greed, and fear, and pride. He wants to burn through and transform everything that spoils us. And that's why we know God as not only the Power behind us, and as the One who loves us, but as the One who commands and fills and inspires us: the one who is working in us to make us good.

Power, and Love, and Goodness. That's what God is.

And Jesus of Nazareth is what happens when you take the reality of God and you translate it into a human life. He is what power and love and goodness, all these abstract concepts, look like made flesh. When people met Jesus – and when people *meet* Jesus today – they find someone who is full of power: who turned water into wine, who calmed a storm, who above all *changed people*, who finally conquered death itself. Nothing stands before Jesus: not nature, not sin, not death. In him is *power*, sheer godly power, of one-being-with-the-Father power.

And that power is all shaped to a particular end, it all gets poured out in a particular direction – and what's that? In his love for human beings, for them to be free, to be whole, to be good. Power poured into love, power poured out to make the world again, to make it beautiful – that's what we find in Jesus. Power, love, goodness: Jesus is the one in whom there is nothing but God. He is the divine life, translated into human.

And God doesn't stop there. God doesn't put Himself into history as Jesus, and then stop. Last week we heard the amazing story from St. Luke of that first Pentecost morning in

Jerusalem with the blazing flames and the strange languages. It is indeed amazing, but we do well to remember also how St. John tells of the coming of the Spirit. The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, and he says 'Peace be with you: as the Father has sent me, so I send you.' And then – this is the crucial bit – he breathed on them, and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' *He breathed on them.*

It's as if – well, it's not as if, it *is* – that Jesus is taking what is most intimate, most inner to himself, and sharing it with his friends, breathing His life, his very self into them. And that means the divine life, the divine self. Jesus is what you get when God is translated into human, and now, in this breathing, Jesus is translating himself – into us. That's what being breathed on by his Spirit means: the life of God is inside us, filling us, just as surely as the kiss of life might fill your lungs, making you alive with the life of God, with power, longing, goodness. As one of the great sayings of the early Church puts it: 'God became human, so that you might become divine. God became human, so that you might become divine.' That's what's happening, however slowly, however sometimes even invisibly to us. God became human so that we might become divine. You and I are on the way to glory, because God is power and love and goodness and He is pouring Himself into us.

So this is what God means:

God is perfect power, love and goodness: who created the world and surges within it.

God is perfect power, love and goodness among us: who was made flesh in Jesus.

God is perfect power, love and goodness within us: as Jesus fills us with his breath, his Spirit. As he makes us divine.

God beyond, God among, God within: and each really, truly God – one, perfect life of power, and love, and goodness. One perfect life, given in three different ways. The Trinity. Not a great mind-bending mathematical puzzle, just the story of our salvation in its simplest, shortest form. It's why, as Matthew's Gospel commands us, we baptise in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To be a Christian is to be plunged – that's what the word 'baptise' means – into this reality: God beyond as Father, God among as Son, God within as Holy Spirit.

To this one God, awesome Power, endless Love, and triumphant Goodness, be all our praise and worship, now and forever. Amen.

**Peter Waddell**