

## **The power of the holy trinity** by Sara Bissell 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Acts 4 5-12

Psalm 23

John 10 11-18

The order in the bible is Psalm 23 – God John, 10 11-18 – Jesus Good Shepherd, and the power of the holy spirit.

Two themes – the good shepherd and the trinity three in one.

When we look at the bible as a whole we are taught that different parts teach us different things about God's nature and his plans for us or can we call that his promises and his presence?

From the perspective of narrative the Old Testament traces the original fall, attempts by God's chosen people to get closer to him and follow his promises and feel his presence with a recurring theme of failure to do that. Of course God knew that, he created us and his plan A is revealed in the gospels- his son – a personification of who we are meant to be. Finally after the death and resurrection of Jesus is revealed the helper comes the holy spirit who will literally give us strength we do not have often do not want to understand the promises and presence of the father.

We are reminded that nothing needs to be added to or taken away for God's plans for us.

Acts: Filled= Power of Spirit

Psalm:Restores= God will restore everything one day – but he restores our soul every day

John – Jesus feely lays down his life so we might lay ours down for others daily

The Holy Spirit is the promise

God is the fulfilment

Jesus is the example to follow

### Psalm 23

We all know this psalm so well and often hear it at funerals.

I read this in a young person's devotional and was interested to see the Psalm set as an example of how psalm 23 came from David's musical talent and in this story David sings psalm 23 to calm Saul's murderous mood, the narrator says – God used David's gift to get him close to King so he could learn about the sovereign and how it is to be King if you are not following God. So we see that God always uses our circumstances to reveal his plans for us.

The Lord provides me with everything I need – he refreshes me, guides me and is closest to me when I am facing evil. Your goodness and love will follow me.

This is an image of our creator – in control of everything unchanging. I don't know about you but when I feel overwhelmed by the chaos of this life there is a tapestry in the church that says God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He never changes

Even when I walk through the valley of death you walk by my side – such an important image and here we see the image of the shepherd that is everywhere in today's passage. Who is the shepherd why is he important? David was a shepherd who became the Shepherd King, God is depicted as a shepherd. Well it's widely recognised that throughout the old and new testament everyone knew and understood the role of the shepherd. What image would be used if the bible were set now – a programmer who created the app that allowed us all the order our groceries online during the pandemic or created chatbots to allow us to ask questions when we need medical advice? A youtuber, a rapper ? I always think

One thing that really comes through in the psalms of david is the nature of God – loving father – a good shepherd and we also see that David has an understanding beyond that of the people of the old testament that death is not the end.

In John 10 the imagery continues and changes Jesus is God the creator but he is also something new The Good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He explains that he is both God and something else – The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep.... I know my sheep... I lay down my life for the sheep. We are known.

The explanation is the choice Jesus says he chose to give up his life, he chose to follow the command of his Father. The shepherds look after the sheep every day not once a week. We should lay down our lives for others daily – how do we do that.

It reminds me of the intimacy of the relationship that Jesus had with his father in heaven – remember when he went to the temple as a 12 year old, remember the mountains he climbed to pray, the nights in Gethsemane?

I think in Ephesians that Paul tells us that that intimacy has been bought for us by Jesus – that intimacy of being a son or a daughter. Tell the story of the German missionary in Shanghai. Somewhere in Peter or is it Ephesians – we are princes and princesses adorned with jewellery our next reality is already bought.....we just need to live like we believe it.

We also see in this passage a picture of how unique our relationship with Jesus is meant to be – my sheep hear my voice, I know them. The picture of Jesus with his arms open saying come to me all you are weary and weak I will give you rest- is for everyone and just for you exactly where you are right now.

Living in confidence...

The character of the apostles in Acts help us to understand the nature of the holy spirit – we have spoken so many times about Peter the fisherman who didn't get it, who denied Jesus yet on this rock Jesus built his church. In this passage Peter has healed a lame beggar and told the crowds that it was in the name of Jesus – many people heard that message and believed and so Peter and John are put in prison and then need to appear before Caiaphas – who thought he had already solved the problem of the way. Peter filled with the holy spirit – there is a power that resides in us that we can rely upon when we do not know how to proceed.

The stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone

The church first described that the temple has become something new. This phrase tells the story that God the creator already knows that the temple will tumble but a new everlasting one has already been built.

What abiding images do we see of the trinity- God never changing- most importantly in these dark times, Jesus the answer to human selfishness, the holy spirit the tool to be better than we can or want to be.

Jesus is the example to follow

God the fulfilment of the promise given

And we understand it through the Holy Spirit

We are filled by the holy spirit, restored in and by the father and given the example to lay down our lives by the son. This is what we should be doing ourselves and as a Church are we?

How can we understand the holy trinity:

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most difficult ideas in Christianity, but it's fundamental to Christians because it:

- states what Christians believe God is like and who he is
- plays a central part in Christians' worship of an "unobjectifiable and incomprehensible God"
- emphasises that God is very different from human beings
- reflects the ways Christians believe God encounters them
- is a central element of Christian identity
- teaches Christians vital truths about relationship and community
- reveals that God can be seen only as a spiritual experience whose mystery inspires awe and cannot be understood logically

1 Peter ;17 since you call on a father who judges impartially live out your time as a foreigner here in reverent faith.