

Daily Discipleship

John 16:12-15

Stories of Discipleship: *A Finite Person's Story*

Focus Question: *How do you as a finite person speak of the infinite nature of God?*

word of life

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” John 16:13 (NRSV)

Read John 16:12-15

Holy Trinity Sunday is celebrated on June 3, 2007, the Sunday after Pentecost. Preachers and teachers wrestle with effective and meaningful ways to describe the divine nature of God. Our finite human minds can only grasp so much of the infinite interrelationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But who desires to worship a god who can be defined by finite words and images of this earth?

As sermons are prepared, some preachers will speak of a woman being a daughter, mother, and wife. The woman has three roles, yet is only one woman. Others will speak of the properties of water, ice and air.

1. *How do you describe the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit?*
2. *What makes it so difficult to explain the Trinity?*

The Gospel text is from John 16. Jesus has promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples so they might have an Advocate to be with them for all times. The Advocate is the Spirit of truth and dwells within the followers of Jesus. (See May 27, 2007 Daily Discipleship, John 14:15-18)

Jesus has much to teach them, but he recognizes the disciples cannot handle all his teachings yet. Some things will not be understood until after the crucifixion and resurrection. Even then, some of the teachings of Jesus will be difficult to grasp.

3. *What things might Jesus want to wait to teach?*
4. *Why can Jesus entrust the Holy Spirit to his teachings?*

As Jesus makes plans for the future of his disciples, he is clear about the instructional plan for his students. They cannot begin to design their own plan for learning, because they cannot grasp the path of salvation which is being provided for humanity. There is no consideration of promoting one of the disciples as a lead teacher. The curriculum has not been revised. Continuity is emphasized as the disciples must learn to live without Jesus walking among them. Yet, their mission is just beginning.

Jesus brings in the best: his own Spirit, the Spirit of truth. The disciples can trust the guidance of the Spirit to keep them connected to the words and teachings of Jesus. The Spirit does not work independently from Jesus for they are one. And Jesus does not work independently from the Father.

5. *How does the Spirit reflect Jesus?*
6. *What role does the Father have in teaching the disciples?*

Jesus is glorified as disciples rely on the Holy Spirit to teach and guide their life in the way of truth.

7. *What questions do you have for the Holy Spirit?*

word among us

Seven-year old Jimmy stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon with his mouth wide-open in awe. Finally, the words came to him, “Mommy, awesome! God did a great job creating this!”

Seventeen-year old Crystal walked into a church sanctuary for the first time with her best friend. She was excited to finally see the inside of a church, but was surprised to see a statue of a man on a cross. Crystal called her friend over and asked, “Who is that man on that cross? What’s the story with that?” Her best friend answered by telling her the story of Jesus. By the end Crystal quietly replied, “Awesome!”

Seventy-year old Matthias was feeling lonely in the nursing home when a visiting team from his church stopped by for a visit. One read from the Bible and the other offered a prayer. By the end, Matthias was encouraged and strengthened, feeling the power of God’s Spirit in the room. As the visitors departed, Matthias said, “How did you know I needed this today? Awesome!”

1. *Describe a time when you were awed and humbled by the presence of God.*
2. *How do you describe God?*

Awesome! That is just one of many words used to describe God at work in our lives. Even the best of poets and writers find themselves in a limited capacity to describe the nature of God. Yet, as we experience the majesty and mystery of God touching and transforming our lives, our hearts desire to sing praises and share the good news. How can we *not* speak of God, yet what words are adequate?

3. *What makes it so challenging to find the words to describe God?*
4. *Will our words ever be adequate? Why or why not?*

Over the centuries, brilliant scholars have sought the words to explain the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with the Nicene Creed being an important confession of faith on the Trinity. If you have time, find the Nicene Creed (in the hymnal or online) and read through it.

5. *How does the Nicene Creed add clarity?*
6. *What do you say to someone who doesn’t understand the Trinity?*

As we struggle to find words to describe God, be it the Holy Trinity or an aspect of faith, it is helpful to recognize our limited capacity to understand all the workings of God. We are not God, so how can we grasp it all? Thus, it is with humble spirits that we receive the gift from Jesus Christ of the Holy Spirit and trust the Holy Spirit to guide our faith. The Holy Spirit continues to draw us close to God through Jesus Christ and keep us in true faith.

7. *How can we learn to trust in God even before we have full understanding?*
8. *How is the Holy Spirit at work helping us to understand God?*
9. *How might we be more open to the teachings of the Holy Spirit?*

Prayer

You are an awesome God. Continue to stretch our finite nature to be open to your infinite love and goodness. Amen

Dig Deeper:

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

last word

Take time to look for
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at work in your life.



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