

Theme: The gift of knowledge/revelation that brings us to a fuller understanding of God.

Last week Michael led us through a celebration of Pentecost, the giving and presence of the Holy Spirit.

From the fruit offered I chose the apple - when asked how each piece of fruit related to Pentecost I remained silent.

Can you guess why?

OK, let's move on from that for a while.

Today's Lectionary theme is the Trinity, and our focus is God's gift to us.

***1. Let's start with God's gift to us.***

What do you think that might be - record responses

These responses are all true and correct.

I want to suggest that another gift is Revelation & Relationship

Let me explain.

You already know that the human race since the beginning has sought to understand our place, purpose and origin.

In many places both in the past and today people have worshipped multiple Gods.

Our first song gave glory to the Trinity and we'll take it a bit further.

Our belief is in one God who has revealed Himself to us through generations but we also claim there are 3 persons in the godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We know of the Trinity because God has revealed Himself in this way to us.

Firstly, by proclamation God tells us that He is the “Alpha and Omega .. who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty”.  
Revelation 1.8

“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me;  
I was found by those who did not seek me.  
To a nation that did not call on my name,  
I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’”  
Isaiah 65.1

By proclamation in Matthew 3.17 God tells us that Jesus is His Son

Jesus attributes his actions as coming from God -

doing the will of the Father  
the Father and I are one

By acclamation the disciples and crowds state that Jesus is the Son of God

Impure spirits acknowledge Him Mark 3.11  
Teachers ask where his knowledge and power come from  
Centurion Mark 5.7

The Holy Spirit is foretold by Jesus and experienced by His followers at Pentecost.

We are not saying there are 3 God’s, but seek to understand the personhood of God through the revelations of Himself that have been given to us.

We struggle to find suitable illustrations of the interconnectedness of the triune Godhead but I want to come back to my apple.

## ***Illustration of Trinity completeness***

Apple - Peel + flesh + core and seeds = all equally part of and called an apple, but part each serves a different role that is interdependent with the other parts.

I asked the question of what you think is God's gift to us, I want to ask you a slightly different question:

### ***2. What is God's gift to you?***

Most Christians are familiar with the [seven gifts of the Holy Spirit](#): wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord, and fortitude.

If the gifts of the Holy Spirit are like virtues, the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the actions that those virtues produce. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit we bear fruit in the form of moral action.

The 12 fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, or kindness, goodness, long-suffering, gentleness, [faith](#), modesty, self-control, and chastity.

Each day we read or hear about the tragedies of life, whether crime, abuse, hardship, loneliness, corruption. The list goes on.

We each experience God in our own way, and from day to day our experience changes. Those days when things are going well, and other days when everything is falling apart.

The early church experience profound suffering and persecution and yet Paul talks of peace and hope.

In Romans 5 he teaches that:

suffering produces perseverance  
perseverance produces character  
character produces hope.

### ***3. God's gift in good times and bad***

Today your experience may be as good as it gets and you rejoice in such songs of praise as Standing on the promises:

Standing on the promises      Verse 3

Standing on the promises I now can see  
Perfect, present cleansing in the blood for me;  
Standing in the liberty where Christ makes free,  
Standing on the promises of God.

Or you may be just running on empty and require the comfort of these words:

He giveth more grace

1. He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;  
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
2. When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources  
Our Father's full giving is only begun.
3. His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

How do experience and use the gifts that are given to you to glorify God?

Proverbs 8 22 - 31

Proverbs 8:22–31 pays tribute to wisdom as having existed from the very beginning of beginnings. In this chapter, wisdom speaks as a woman, in a poetic style used by Solomon. Since the wisdom in question is godly truth, rooted in the knowledge and nature of God, that wisdom predates the creation of the world and everything in it. Like God's goodness and justice, His wisdom has always been part of who He is and how He creates.

Some of God's promises:

A new heaven & earth that ... will endure for ever Isaiah 66.22

But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells 2 Peter 3.13

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. Revelation 21.1/3

Romans 5 1-5

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Describing the fantastic benefits that come with being justified by God's grace through our faith in Christ, Paul began the previous verse by saying that we "rejoice in our sufferings." He does not mean "we" in the sense of all mankind, but in the context of those who express faith in God, as exemplified by Abraham. Paul also did not mean by this that we feel happy when things are hard. Instead he showed that, for those in Christ, suffering is an opportunity to move closer to God and to grow in our faith. Suffering for the believer, Paul wrote, produces endurance, the ability to continue trusting God for longer periods of time and through more difficult circumstances.

Now he adds that this battle-tested faith of endurance produces in Christians the quality of character. Christians of character choose to keep doing the right things on a consistent basis. The pattern is that suffering causes us to trust God on a deeper level, and the more we trust God, the most likely we are to consistently make right choices. We become Christians of proven character.

Character, too, produces a new quality in us: hope. In the context of Romans and the New Testament, "hope" is confidence that God will deliver what He promised. Hope implies some level of certainty that we will receive God's good forever. Hope defines the baseline or a "bottom line" for a Christian's thoughts and emotions. No matter what comes along, we are fully convinced that our ultimate end will be sharing in the glories of God forever.

### Colossians 3

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

<sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

<sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.