

Trinity Sunday, All Saints Cathedral Juba
7th June 2009
Psalm 8; Matthew 28:18-20

Prayer

Introduction

It is wonderful to once again share Gods word with you this morning. I bring greetings from the Diocese of Kajo-Keji. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the new GOSS Minister for Social Welfare, Gender and Religious Affairs.

The Doctrine of the Trinity.

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is the day when we remember the Trinity. This is one of the unique doctrines of the Christian faith. Last Sunday was **Pentecost Sunday**. We celebrated the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon the followers of Jesus.

What is the Trinity?

The Trinity is the doctrine of "God is One, Yet God is Three". This is the doctrine of three persons in one God, equal in divinity yet distinct in personality.

The Trinity is a teaching that is not explicitly spelt out in the Bible. In fact the very word "Trinity" does is not found in the Bible. This is doctrine that has been agreed upon by early Christians. It is nit a doctrine that is easy to understand. Early Christians struggled to understand it as seen by the story below.

The story St Augustine of Hippo

A story is told of St Augustine of Hippo, a great philosopher and theologian. He was preoccupied with the

doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. He wanted so much to understand the doctrine of one God in three persons and to be able to explain it logically. One day he was walking along the sea shore and reflecting on this matter. Suddenly, he saw a little child all alone on the shore. The child made a whole in the sand, ran to the sea with a little cup, filled her cup with sea water, ran up and emptied the cup into the hole she had made in the sand. Back and forth she went to the sea, filled her cup and came and poured it into the hole. Augustine drew up and said to her, "Little child, what are you doing?"

She replied, "I am trying to empty the sea into this hole "How do you think," Augustine asked her, "that you can empty this immense sea into this tiny hole and with this tiny cup?"

She answered back, "And you, how do you suppose that with your small head you can comprehend the immensity of God?" With that the child disappeared.

Examples to illustrate the Trinity

Like Augustine we may not be able to understand the **how** of the Trinity but I think it is very important to understand the **why**. Let us see some of the examples that others have given to try to explain the doctrine of the Trinity.

Salvation

In the story of salvation we attribute creation to the Father, redemption to the Son and sanctification to the Holy Spirit. Though they are distinct as persons, they do not exists or acts in isolation from each other. God the Father is the saving God. He then sent the Son, the Son became man (incarnation) and saved us, the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost to bring this message to all nations and to

convict man of sins. In the Trinity we see the unity of purpose among the three persons of the Trinity.

Marriage

Another example of the trinity is in marriage, when a boy loves a girl; they seal the loving relation by producing a baby. The Father, mother and the child is an example of love perfected becomes a kind of "trinity".

Baptism

Baptism and teaching reveal the saving Trinity to the sinner. The Father adopts us as His children. Gal. 3:26-27. The Son became our Redeemer. Eph. 5:26; Gal. 3:27. The Holy Spirit becomes our Comforter. Eph. 1:14.

When Jesus was baptized the Father spoke from heaven, the Son was being baptized and the Holy Spirit descended as a dove. Mt. 3:13-17. When Jesus ascended to heaven He prayed to the Father to send the Spirit. Jn. 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7.

Creation:

In the creation, God said: "Let US make man" Gen. 1:26. This shows that God was on his own. The US is an indication of plural. The word for God in Hebrew is ELOHIM which is plural not singular.

I Cor. 8:6 reads "There is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things."

Isaiah 61:1

Is. 61: 1 we read "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Jesus quotes refers to this in Luke. 4:18. The word "Me" stands for Jesus.

Psalm 8:

Think of the words of Psalm 8:

"When I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

The Creeds

All three creeds (Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian) ascribe creation to the Father, redemption to the Son and sanctification to the Holy Spirit. All the creeds also talk of the Trinity.

Three arms of government

At University, one of the courses I did was in Political Science. One thing I learn was that there are three arms of government namely **Executive, Legislature** and **Judiciary**. The Trinity can be compared to the three arms of government. The role of the Executive is to execute and implement all aspects of government represented by the President, the cabinet and civil service. The role of Legislature is to pass laws for running the State and also to act as a watchdog to ensure that the Executive is performing its role well. The judiciary ensures that the laws

passed by parliament are obeyed by all and those who do not do so are corrected and punished.

When any of the three arms of government is not performing their roles as they should, there is chaos in government. Let us take the issue of corruption that is the talk of most people in Southern Sudan -. The three arms of government need to play their role. The Legislative need to pass laws that fight corruption, the judiciary needs to ensure that those who practice corruption are brought to book and the executive needs to ensure that all those who are mentioned in any form of corruption are not given any roles but are investigated and brought to book. There should be seen a political will to fight corruption.

If the three arms of government all worked well together, some of the problems that be-devil us like tribal conflicts would also be settled. One of the contributing factors to the tribal conflicts is the proliferation of small arms. We need to borrow a leaf from what others have done. I understand that a pastor in the Democratic Republic of Congo had a scheme where he exchanged guns for bicycles. We could do the same thing here whereby we could look at all our areas of Southern Sudan and have guns exchanged for what is relevant in each area. This could be bicycles, cattle, goats and scholarships for studies.

This weekend I heard over Radio Juba that the cabinet of Central Equatoria rejecting a proposal to sell government owned houses to individuals. This is a commendable effort. If such a proposal has indeed been made, I would suggest individuals in government and outside who would like to own houses need to arrange with commercial banks and take mortgages that should be paid over a period of time whether 10 to 20 years. The terms should in

such a way that those who do not pay should forfeit the said houses. It should not be a situation similar to what is affecting one of the local commercial banks where people who took loans could not pay back. I thought that when you take a loan, there is often collateral where you are saying if I do not repay this loan as stipulated, you will sell my plot or take these particular assets – what happened when these loans were taken. Our Executive should ensure that commercial banks operate as per the laws and regulations passed by our legislature and the judiciary should ensure that banks and individuals who do not follow such laws are brought to book or face the law.

One proposal that would need to be supported is the individual ownership of vehicles. The government needs to facilitate civil servants by providing vehicles on hire purchase so that a limited category of constitutional post holders and top civil servants use government vehicles during government function and approved. Private ownership of vehicles enhances their proper use so that they are not abused.

If the three arms of government work as they should then people would see the government as their government so that when there is a reshuffle people will see a change in the operations of government so that such changes are not like a game of musical chairs but people are moved around because of their abilities that is to say based on **what** they know in that area rather than **who** they know or **where** they come from.

The Great Commission

This passage we read in **Matthew 28:18-20** has been referred to as the Great Commission. This passage is not only to pastor but also to all believers. This can mean that

the mission that Christ has given us is to be done with him and not on our own.

We are to be witnesses wherever we are and in whatever capacity we have. We should be Christians 7-24 even days a week and 24 hours a day.

Be a Witness

It is important to share the same gospel with others. Every Christian should be a witness. A **witness** is a person who has had a personal experience or saw what he or she is testifying about. The Christian should start to witness right where they are – in their “Jerusalem”. We are to begin right where we are – at school and in our homes, with our classmates and relations, and then with everyone we come across in lorries, on the streets etc.

The Christian politician, civil servant, NGO worker, business man/woman, student must be a witness in where he or she is and also in what they do.

Conclusion

We cannot fully understand some of the Christian doctrines or teachings. Among this is the doctrine of the Trinity. Even though we may not fully understand these doctrines we must believe what God says to us in His Word the Bible. It must be the standard by which we measure our doctrines and our faith.

I am reminded of the words of the Song in the Shukuru Yesu 117:

Keep me shining Lord, keep me shining Lord in all I say and do that the world may see Christ lives in me and learn to serve him.

I would like the choir to lead us as we prayerfully sing this song.

Prayer

Ask the congregation to each confess their weaknesses and ask themselves what contribution they can make in their various roles and capacity. Let us pray.