

A small, dark wooden boat with an orange interior is floating on a calm, blue lake. In the background, a rocky shoreline is visible under a hazy, overcast sky. The water is still, reflecting the boat and the sky.

*Who is this God we
follow?*

Genesis 1, 1-3

It's a mystery

- The Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- 3 persons, equally divine
- Central but confusing idea
- We don't often talk about God's "tri-personality"
- But we will this week!

Ultimately God may be hard to understand - but he is easy to know



The Trinity "three-ness"

- All Christian Churches refer to "the Trinity"
- But how can God be THREE people and ONE person at the same time?
- Problematic:
 - Many Muslims think Christians worship 3 Gods
 - AND "technicalities" of the Trinity has caused division
 - AND... I wasn't looking forward to this sermon!



Can we find a helpful comparison?

Lots of people have had a go at this!

- Egg – yolk, white & shell ... BUT
- H₂O – ice, water & steam ... BUT
- Relationships - a man can be a Father, Son & Husband ... BUT
- Timing – Old Testament - New Testament – Now ... BUT
- The mind - memory, understanding, and will ... BUT
- All slightly helpful ... but not correct



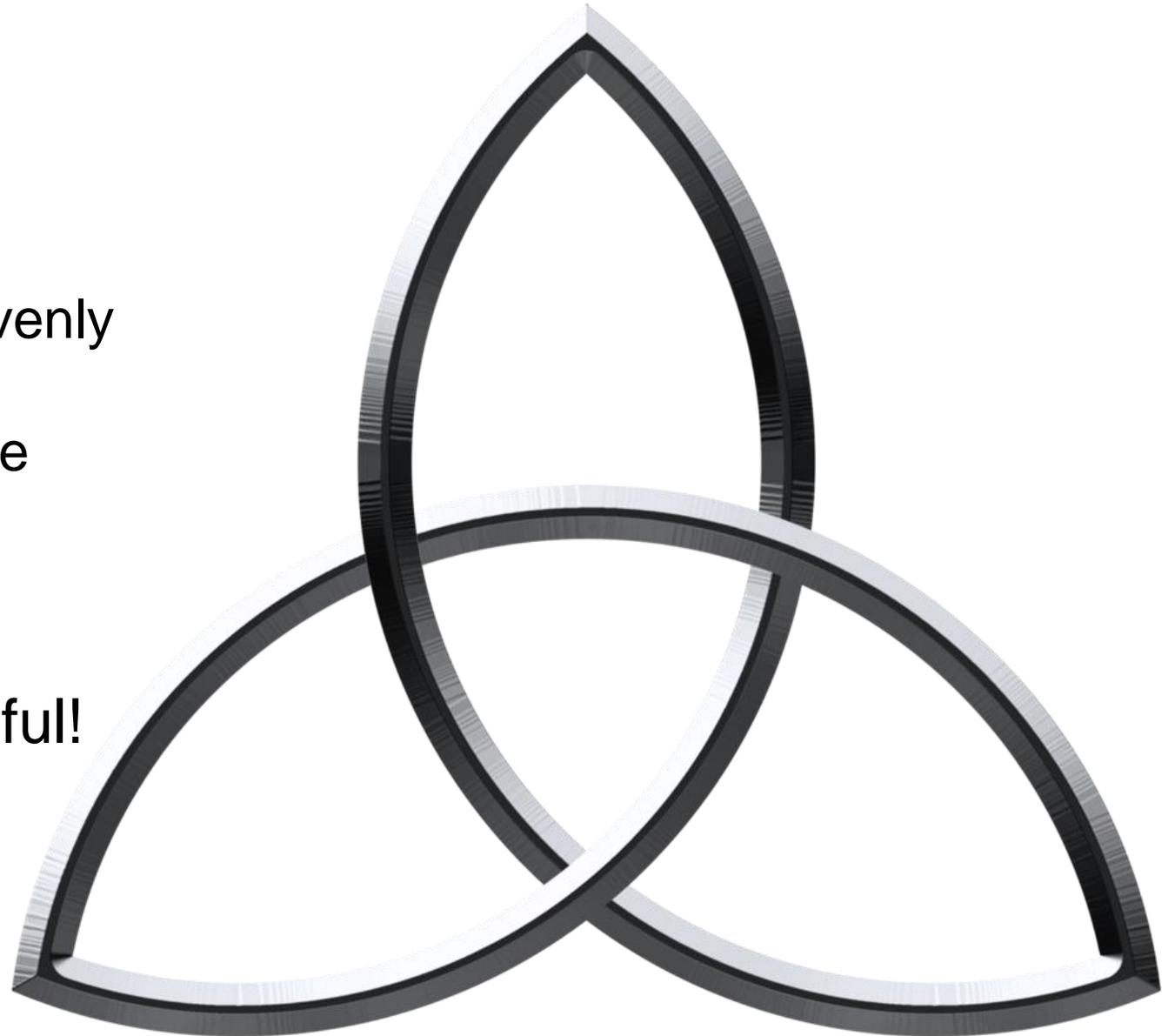
Keeping it simple

- Many Christians think of:
 - The Father as God in the Heavenly realm ordering the Universe
 - Jesus as God who became one of us
 - Holy Spirit as God who comes to live within us

... Also not quite right – but helpful!

Double click

.... *What does the Bible say*



Let's try starting at the start ...

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. (NIV)

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: "Light!" And light appeared. (The Message)

The Trinity is right there from the start

- God the Father is the central character here, ordering the Universe
- The Holy Spirit is “hovering” over the face of the waters”
- And Jesus is ... *the actual words that God speaks*
- Jesus is the creative force God uses to bring the Universe into being
- God’s speech - independent of God but originating with God

Jesus IS “the words that God speaks”

Strange but John confirms this:

- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made ...*
- This force that drives back the darkness will become flesh ...a gurgling baby ...
- This was shocking to its original hearers and it should shock us today

And the God the Holy Spirit?

So Father and Son work together to bring about an ordered universe ...

Meanwhile what is God the Holy Spirit doing?



The Holy Spirit tells us of God's own heart

- The very breath of God – on the face of the waters
- In Genesis 1 God's word and God's breath are parallel ideas
- More literally:
 - Holy Spirit "Ruach"
 - Its "brooding" rather than "hovering"
 - Literally: *"the spirit of God continued brooding over the waters"* – deep emotive thinking



The Holy Spirit tells us of God's heart

- Brooding thinking ... what a picture!
- An almighty God – knowing what is to come - but with a heart that broods, grieves, longs ...
- And consistent with Jesus' later description of Holy Spirit as "Comforter"

So God is community from the very beginning



Lets talk about this Holy Spirit for a minute

- ... Because we rarely do!
- This is the person of God we seem to know least about
- Also in Bible times – “a funny thing happened on my way to Ephesus”
- Even today the Holy Spirit is the “Cinderella” doctrine

James Packer: “Christians are in no doubt as to what Christ did but the average Christian is in a complete fog as to what the Holy Spirit does”



What if there was NO Holy Spirit?

- The church would lose spiritual gifts BUT not just that ...
- If there was no Holy Spirit there would be:
 - No Bible
 - No agreement on what Christians believe
 - No Christians!

'If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth. John 14:15-17



A cosmic scene featuring a bright orange star on the left, a blue nebula on the right, and a rocky planet surface at the bottom. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

**This is all very interesting but
knowing About God
is not the same
as knowing God**

Unfathomable but NOT unknowable

- We can easily know all ABOUT someone without ever knowing them
 - *This is the risk (Matthew 7)*
- Our God is a personal God who knows us **and wants to be known**
 - *This is surprising!*



The meaning of life?

- It is not 42
- It is to know God
- It is a compelling, exciting and exalted goal!

..... OK but how?



How can WE know God?

Being with God

- God has a personality, heart and spirit
- God can be experienced in worship, prayer
- God invites us to commit time to be in His company

Going with God

- Get to know HIS interests HIS concerns
- Lining up our ways with HIS ways
- Without this we can only ever know ABOUT Him

*Being with God is important but **GOING** with God is where we hesitate*

Knowing God means Going with God

- God knows you, loves you as you are
- You cannot disillusion God!
- God invites you to stop knowing about Him, and come and know Him
 - To follow
 - To something specific
 - To share the journey with others

Do you (really) want to follow?

