

Most of you will know that before I entered Anglican ministry, I was a Baptist Minister. I went to Baptist College in January 1986. I was 26, married to Janet with 3 small children. I was in a class of about 20 men and women who were beginning their training.

The first thing we had to do was survive the Greek crash course. Everybody who started Baptist College had to do this. It was hell, unless of course you were a languages guru as some people were. But for the ordinary mortals among us, it was pretty grim. It was 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, for a month.

Our college Principal was a Greek scholar, he had translated the New Testament into Tripura in his time as a Baptist Missionary in India/Bangladesh. So, he took the class. Every day, I thought about quitting. It was only that a lot of the others were finding it hard going that keep me getting up in the morning.

At the end of the course, everyone got a private audience with the Principal and a judgement as to your suitability for the study of Greek. I'll never forget his words to me, "Scott, you could probably do this, but it will require a lot of work." And the relief that flooded over me as I replied, "thank you sir, I think I'll give it a miss!"

In the end the class was whittled down to four and the rest of us did English Lit, which was one of the best courses I ever did at College.

Well, this is what early conceptions of the Trinity were like. Six centuries of nothing but hard slog, and Greek! It is no wonder that the Trinity has always been seen as the most difficult of Christian doctrines to understand, and if you look at it in the context of the thought forms and language of those first 6 centuries, it is.

Thankfully, like a lot of things, medicine, science and technology, theology has also moved on from those early days.

Today we tend to talk of the Trinity in more relational and experiential terms, rather than substance and essence. And in this regard the words of Jesus in John 3:11 are really helpful, **"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen."**

So today, for all of us the Trinity should be a more approachable idea, than a month of Greek, 8 hours a day 5 days a week.

**"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen."**

All of us have stories of the love God has shown toward us and our families. All of us have stories of the impact Jesus has made in and on our lives, and the lives of our loved ones. All of us have stories of the presence of the Spirit in our Christian journey, and the Christian journeys of our friends and those we care about.

**"Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen."**

When we tell of these things, when we speak of these things, we speak of the Trinity, the transforming nature of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives and the life of the world.

Trinity Sunday marks the end of the first part of the church year. That first part, has us focused on the career of Jesus, if you like. All that happened to him and through him, from Advent to Pentecost. Trinity starts the second part of the year where we focus on our response to those things. Were we

focus on the transforming power of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The transforming power in our lives and the world, and we **“speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen!”**

In Isaiah 6:1-8 Isaiah is transformed from observer to prophet. In John 3:1-17 Nicodemus is faced with a transformation so overwhelming; it can only be explained in terms of a complete rebirth.

Romans 8:12-17 speaks of the transformation from living a life dominated by self, to a life led by the Holy Spirit. Transformation in Romans becomes a genuine hope for everyone, as God adopts us into God's family as God's own children.

From observer to Prophet, from birth to rebirth, from self to Spirit, from orphan to child. The transforming power of God. These are the transformations we have seen in our own lives and families, and continue to keep seeing. These transformations are not the essence and substance of the nature of Trinity, but the relational, experiential Trinity in action. **“Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen.”**

This, really, is what is important about Trinity Sunday. God as Trinity, working in us and in the world. Not difficult computations in a language and thought form long lost to most of humanity.

My transformation from skilled labourer to Greek scholar may not have gone as well as our Baptist College Principal may have wanted, but it went well enough to get me this far. And the transformation I have seen and experienced, just as we all have, in that getting here, has been nothing but the work of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which we celebrate today.

**“Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen.”**

Thanks be to God.