Study on Matthew 28:16-20

**\*Jesus drew near and said to them, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always to the end of the age”** *(Matt. 28:16-20).*

**In the beginning was the Word;**

**the Word was with God,** *in God’s presence,*

**and the Word was God….**

**And the Word became flesh**

**and made his dwelling among us.**

**Out of the fullness of his grace, he has blessed us all, giving us one blessing after another**.    **God gave the Law through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.     No one has ever seen God.** **The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father’s side, he has made him known** *(John 1;1-2, 16-18).*

**\*For God so loved the world that** **he gave his one and only Son,**

**so that whoever believes in him** **may not be lost but have eternal life** *(John 3:16).*

**\*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in union with Christ Jesus our Lord** *(Rom. 6:23).*

DVD Spot: **Matthew DVD, *the visual Bible*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E_jq8scNxM>

\*Matthew 28:16-20, *plus the Call of Jesus to follow him*

Discussion Questions:

1) If someone asked you, “What one earth is the Trinity all about!?”, what would you say in reply? What does the doctrine of the Trinity mean to you?

Have explanations using the three states of water, *namely “Water, ice, and steam”,* or an apple, *made up of “the skin, the flesh, and core”*, helped you understand the concept?

2) Did the fairy story involving the birds battering their bodies against the bell to save Lars provide an image for you of God’s love for you? How has your awareness of God’s love for you changed your life? Share with one another what God’s love means for you.

3) What has God done to rescue you? What has He rescued you from? What has he rescued you for?

Has God’s gift of the Holy Spirit to you enabled you to live as God wants you to live your life? Has the Holy Spirit in you made you more like Jesus? Share your experience of the Holy Spirit of God in you.

4) Previously on the Holy Spirit, we heard:

**What a wonderful gift the Holy Spirit is to us!! The Father and the Son live together in the communion of the Spirit, and that same Spirit of God lives in us.**

Does this help you understand the doctrine of the Trinity?

Share any more thoughts that you have on God as Trinity.

5) One pastor friend talks about praying to God and imagining him sitting on three chairs: one for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit. Is this a helpful suggestion for you in praying to God? Share how you would pray to God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Quotes:

The following are quotes from Sunday’s message on the theme: “Thank you, O our Father…”

\*Today is Trinity Sunday, a day on which we focus on the fact that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **In most other years, on Trinity Sunday, I’ve gone to great trouble to outline why we confess that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit….**

**I’ve explained at length how the only way that the early Christian could make sense of their experience of God as our dear Father in heaven, of Jesus was God among us, and of the Spirit was God in us, was to confess that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and that together they are God.**

**And in the past, I’ve tried to help us understand the concept of the Trinity by using illustrations like water *as ice, liquid water, and steam,* and an apple *as skin, flesh, and core….***

**\*This year, though, I just want to try to enable us to better appreciate God: to better understand what He is like, how much He loves you and me, and the lengths to which He has gone to rescue us. To do this, I want to tell you a fairy story….**

**\*The fairy story ends this way:**

Lars walked into the church, and quickly climbed up the stairs to the bell tower at the top. **He looked at the bell, and he could see spots of blood on the bell. He looked down to the floor of the bell tower, and there he saw white feathers, more blood, and the bodies of the the two white doves who had thrown their tiny bodies at the bell twelve times out of love for the woodcutter*.***

**\*Here we have a mental picture which reminds us of what the God who created the universe and all that is, was prepared to do for us. In a module on *Jesus* in the Confirmation course that I’ve used over the years, God is described there as “God in a bod”. That’s who Jesus was and is: “God become a human being for us”.**

**\*What did God rescue us from? Well, first of all from being trapped in a darkened room so to speak, *a lot like Lars was in our fairy story.* What darkness am I talking about? Well, the darkness of guilt, and emptiness, and fear, *a darkness which is ours if we live our life apart from God….* Through Jesus, His Son, God has rescued us from darkness and brought us into the sunshine of freedom** *(John 8:31-32).*

**And secondly, God rescued us through Jesus from the sentence of death. We, like Lars in the story, were facing death, *and were facing being delivered up into the jaws of a snake, Satan.* We each deserve to die and to be separated from God for eternity, because of what we have done to hurt God, hurt one another, and hurt others.**

**But the wonderful news of the Bible is that “God in a bod” has battered and bloodied Himself in order to rescue us. Jesus, God’s Son, suffered the pain of hell for us on the cross *in our stead,* and he died on the cross for us, *in our stead.***

**\*And God doesn’t leave us to struggle on by ourselves on our own…. To us who allow ourselves to be rescued by God, God also gives His Spirit. God doesn’t only rescue us, and take us in His family as His forgiven children, but He also comes to live in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of God”, God Himself, lives in each of us who trust in Jesus as our Saviour, and He empowers us to *be* His children, *to be like Jesus*** *(1 Cor. 6:19; 12:3; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:6).*