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| Matt 28:16-20Eph 3: 14-21 | Understanding God | Pinelands – 9am – 04/06/2023Thornton – 10:30am – 04/06/2023 |

We all want to… Know God… more

 Explain God… Better

Today is Trinity Sunday… Which is just another way of us…

trying to understand God Better.

**Philosopher and Theologian**… St Augustine,

While walking along a beach…

was puzzling over how to explain God.

While walking he observed a young boy with a bucket,

*running back and forth with a bucket…*

*each time he would pour water from the sea*

 *into a hole he had dug in the sand.*

Augustine asked, ***"Young man what are you doing?"***

The boy replied, ***"I'm trying to put the ocean into this hole."***

In that moment Augustine realized what he was trying to do…

To put**… The infinite God into his finite mind.**

*(Michael Green, Illustrations for Biblical Preaching, Baker Book House, 1993, p. 389.)*

I love that statement…. Trying to put…

 **The infinite God into a finite mind.**

We can debate / analyse / research all the possible questions…

 *Suffering? Grace? Big God in small hearts?*

We can view / explain / dissect all the illustrations and pictures of **GOD**

***THE BOTTOM LINE IS…***

**We will never fully Understand or even Explain God**

**or His love for us.**

Last week **Rev Sivewe** shared with us an illustration of…

 His son and an Airplane… Far away it seems soo small

 Up Close it is huge…

 He concluded… ***The closer you are to God***

 ***The Bigger he seems.***

To build on that illustration I want to say…

 ***The closer we get to God…***

 The more we think we understand Him…

 ***OFTEN…*** the more complex he becomes.

**It is like a Rose bush…**

 You see it from a fair distance… You know it is a **Rose Bush**

 **BUT…** The closer you get the **more detail** you see

 The petals, the thorns, the details

 **Very close…** Smell the Fragrance.

As **Paul** prays for the Christians at Ephesus..

**He says…**

***“May you have the power to understand how broad and long,***

 ***how high and deep, is Christ’s love, Yes, may you come to***

 ***know his love – although it can never be fully known.***

As much as we Entertain and Explore all the difficult questions…

 ***Even try to Explain God…***

I have found, in my faith Journey…

 It is always helpful to return to some **SIMPLE FACTS…**

**The FACTS are….**

 That God loves us…

 He sent His Son, Jesus to earth…

 AND… through the Holy Spirit…

 **God is PRESENT** in our… everyday lives.

***Literally…*** It is as **SIMPLE as that…**

 **GOD… Loves Us**

 **JESUS… Came to Us**

 **HOLY SPIRIT … Stays with Us**

 That is **GOD…**  **3 in 1… The TRINITY**

***BUT…*** How do we **Explain it** and **Understand it**

 **How do we** put an **Infinite GOD** into our **Finite Minds**

***The following story is told of a…***

Prince who wanted to find a maiden suitable to be his queen.

One day while running an errand in the local village

for his father he passed through a poor section.

As he glanced out the windows of the carriage his eyes fell upon a

beautiful peasant maiden.

During the ensuing days he often passed by the young lady

 and soon fell in love.

But he had a problem… ***… How would he seek her hand?***

He could order her to marry him.

But even a prince wants his bride to marry him freely…

and voluntarily and not through coercion.

He could put on his most splendid uniform and drive up to her front door in a carriage drawn by six horses.

But if he did this he would never be certain that the maiden

 loved him or was simply overwhelmed…

 with all of the splendor.

The prince came up with another solution.

He would give up his kingly robe.

He moved, into the village, entering not with a crown…

but in the clothes of a peasant.

He lived among the people, talked their language and…

shared their interests and concerns.

**In time** the maiden grew to love him for who he was…

because he had first loved her.

*(Sermon Illustrations, 1999.)*

**The King** is **God**… **The Prince** is **Jesus…**

And**… We** are the **Peasant Maiden…**

 God is ***PRESENT*** in our… everyday lives.

**GOD… *He loves so much…***

 ***He gives up so much…***

 ***Just to prove His love for you.***

 ***Just to Demonstrate His love for you.***

It is… ***MYSTERIOUS, INCOMPREHENSIBLE…***

**But…** It is in that ***MYSTERY…***

 That we begin to **Realise…  *that…***

 **God** is PRESENT in our… everyday lives.

**EVEN WHEN… WE DO NOT…**

Understand it… It just does not make sense / confusing

Feel it… Emotions a all over the place

Even believe it… Everything points away from God

**EVEN THEN… God is** **PRESENT**

Simple **FACTS…** God… **LOVES us**

 Jesus… **CAME to us**

Holy Spirit… **STAYS with us**

 **GOD… Is PRESENT**

 It is… ***MYSTERIOUS, INCOMPREHENSIBLE…***

It does not answer the debates or the big questions

It does not explain the theology of the Trinity

It **does not** put the ocean into the hole…

**But…** It is in that ***MYSTERY…***

 That we begin to **Realise…  *that…***

 **God is** **PRESENT** **in our…** everyday lives.

I conclude with the words of **Paul…**

 **“To him who by means of his power working in us is**

 **able to do so much more than we can ever ask for,**

 **or even think of:**

 **To God be the glory in the Church and in**

 **Christ Jesus for all time, for ever and ever!**

 **AMEN.**

**Matthew 28:16-20**

***Jesus Appears to His Disciples***

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. 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: baptize 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.”

**Ephesians 3:16-21**

I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen.

**Prayer of Intercession**

God of love, hear us when we call:

Hear our prayers for the whole earth plunged into uncertainty and crisis. We pray for every leader, advisor and government having to make difficult and life-altering decisions under huge pressure. Bring your wisdom and discernment to their tasks of responsibility, that they act with integrity and foresight. Remind us that there is no height nor depth, no corner of our planet where your love does not reach.

 God of love, hold the world in your hands

 Hear our prayers for our own president and his cabinet, those who must enforce law, and our fellow citizens. We pray for great patience and restraint in circumstances that could get volatile. We ask special protection for the defenceless and special compassion for the most vulnerable, the most disadvantaged and the most endangered at this time. We pray for courage, resilience and fortitude for all.

 God of love, hold the world in your hands

Hear our prayers for our own communities. Asking that you remind them that when they turn inward, you are already there and the darkness within cannot hide your eternal light.

We pray in particular for those who cope with unseen violence, abuse and harm. Remind them that you are the sword and shield.

We pray in particular for those who are facing financial hardship. Remind them that you are faithful.

We pray in particular for those who are facing health problems. Remind them that you are the healer of all wounds.

We pray in particular for those who are facing suffering of any kind. Remind them that you are always by our side.

Finally, we pray for ourselves. Place in our hearts the clarity that we are part of a universal act of love, we partner with You in a love that embraces the whole world.

Amen