

A Complex God

Genesis 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Trinity Sunday

June 4, 2023 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown, Iowa

- **Introduction:** Have you ever talked with yourself? You may not want to make this too public, but I think most people have “interior conversations” in an effort to process some event and think a questions or a problem to a logical conclusion. I once heard that it is ok to talk with oneself, even to argue with oneself. It is when you start losing the arguments that you start to run into trouble. Yet in the complex nature of God, we find communication, making all good, life-giving communication a reflection of the nature of God and thus, sacred. Perhaps, when we engage in good fellowship, God the Creator, speaks new things, changing things, in our lives that make us more like the new creation we are declared to be in Christ. Sometimes He speaks in the midst of our speech.

- **Set the Stage**
Genesis 1:1-2

In our first passage of Scripture, the first two verses of the Bible, we find that God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, chaotic and lacking order. The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters, and then God spoke. The word for “create” in the Old Testament always has God as its subject. People are wonderfully creative, but God speaks, and in speaking can create in a way that only God can do. To give a rather negative example, toward the end of the life of Jesus the high priest, in the midst of plotting His demise, declared that it was necessary for one person to die for the people. He did not seem to realize how right he was. He was thinking of political expediency as a justification for murder, but the Holy Spirit prophesied through him that Christ's death would pay for the sins of the world. The Holy Spirit spoke through the high priest without his realization.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

In our second passage, toward the end of 2 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul tells the troubled church in that most decadent city of the Roman Empire to "become complete." The root of the idea to heal and repair themselves and then he gives them the benediction, invoking the communion, or fellowship of the Holy Spirit. I think the juxtaposition is deliberate. The process of us becoming full, healthy and complete involves fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and I propose that involves the Holy Spirit becoming involved in our fellowship.

- **Main Point:** The members of the Trinity communicate, so fellowship is part of the nature of God.

Application: Appreciate and cherish fellowship. Seek friendships in the church that allow you to be vulnerable and honest. Pray and let others (often those friends) pray for you as well. Expect the Spirit of God to enrich you by the means of fellowship.

Larry Crabb, the influential Christian counselor who passed away a few years ago, maintained that good fellowship has good therapy, and that often a wounded person doesn't need to relive and re-examine past trauma as much as he needs good, honest trustworthy fellowship in which he can be vulnerable and in which the fellowship of the Holy Spirit can intervene. Written in the publication "Christianity Today" shortly after his death, Crabb "read Australian Anglican theologian David

Broughton Knox's work on the centrality of the Trinity to Christian doctrine and was convinced that had to be at the heart of any therapy that was really Christian. "We were designed to exist in community, and there has to be a Trinitarian kind of relating possible," he said.

Crabb started to think that when therapy worked—regardless of the psychological theories of the therapist—it was because of the relationship established in vulnerability. That, he decided, needed to be central." Much of this therapy takes place in fellowship times and in small groups. The conversation starts with surface material and small talk, but sometimes moves to deeper and more vulnerable subjects. There is something healthy, and holy, about that.

- Conclusion

The Trinity tells us that the nature of God is complex. There is one and only one God, who is as much one as I am one person. That same God is three, and as much three as any three people in this Sanctuary, and they are one and three at the same time. There is servanthood in the nature of God because of the Trinity, and there is fellowship as well. The members of the Trinity communicate and share with each other, and the Holy Spirit, I believe, can and does enter into fellowship and community to speak creatively and in a manner that brings healing and growth. Fellowship is part of the nature of God, so it is vital to the nature of a healthy church.

*From the Christianity Today article written shortly after Crabb's death