

GOD IN ACTION

Proverbs 8:22-31

Imagine that you make up a word that no one else in the whole world ever spoke or thought. You write that word and its meaning on a piece of paper. It is your special word which explains something in a way no other word can. Someone happens to glance at the piece of paper and sees the new word. He asks you about it, and you explain about the word you made up, how to pronounce it, and what it means. Then he begins to share the word with other people. Before long everyone is using it. Your word is no longer that special.

That is what has happened to the word “God.” In the Old Testament God gave His name “Yahweh” to Moses. It was such a sacred name that by Jesus’ time the people were afraid to even speak it out loud. But “God” is used today so easily with things that have no connection to God that what does it really mean to say, “God”?

“What in God’s name are you doing?”

“God, he’s such a nerd!”

“It is such a god-forsaken place!”

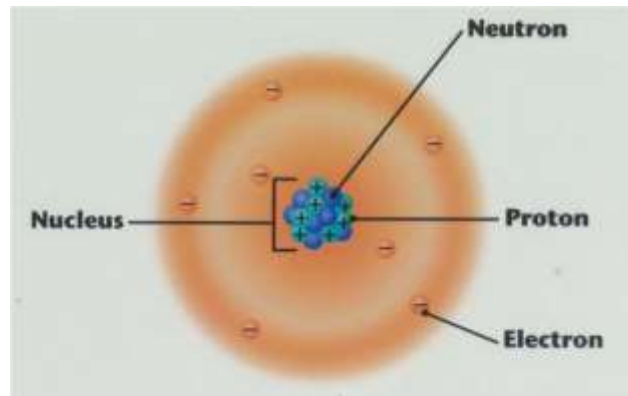
Today is Trinity Sunday. Today we affirm how God has given us His name—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is the name into which we were baptized. It is the name by which we begin our worship services. Luther taught that we should call on that name each morning when we get up and make the sign of the cross, so that the rest of our day revolves around God. Trinity is about making God special, not commonplace.

So God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We say that each Sunday. But what does it mean? We make pictures like this:



to describe the Trinity. St. Patrick used the three-leaf clover to describe the Trinity in Ireland.

But how can God be three in one? Either He is three or one. $1+1+1=3$, not 1.



This is a model of an atom. We use this to describe an atom. But it is not what an atom is. We use it to explain an atom in a way most people can comprehend. But a much more accurate way to explain an atom would be to write a series of mathematical equations that would cover a whole wall and which just about all of us could not understand. But even that is not exactly what an atom is. How much greater it is to even begin to understand God.

In the middle ages philosophers asked, “If God is almighty, then can God create a weight so heavy that He cannot lift it? Or if God is so smart, can He come up with an equation He cannot figure out? We go in circles like a dog chasing his tail trying to figure that out.

So we ask the questions, “What does God look like?” “Why doesn’t He show Himself to us?” “If He is so great, then why doesn’t He make things better for us?” “Why doesn’t He talk to me?” “Where is this God?”

The book of Proverbs speaks about wisdom. In chapter 8, wisdom is compared to a part of God. The early church recognized that this wisdom was referring to the second person of the Trinity, the Son, who became a human called Jesus. The description of wisdom in Proverbs 8 doesn’t tell us what color hair or eyes the Son has, His height, weight or build. There is no list of degrees or where He went to school. But it does say this of wisdom:

I was there when God set the heavens in place, when He reached out the horizons on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when He gave the sea its boundary so that the waters would not overstep his command, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was His craftsman at His side.

The Bible tells us little about who God is, but it tells us a ton about what He does. God created the world. He confronts and punishes us because of our sin. He sent His Son into the world to save us from sin. He comes into our lives each day to forgive us and guide us. That is what we see in the Trinity—the God of action.

In English we divide words into parts of speech. Words are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. Nouns are naming words like

“dog” and “girl” and “house.” Verbs are action words like “run” and “talk” and “swim.” “God” is a noun, but as we proclaim that name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, He becomes a verb.

In the “Crossway” series we have used in church the symbol for “God” looks like this:

The circle shows that God is eternal: He has no beginning and no end. That really doesn’t tell us much because it is so incomprehensible to us. How can we understand eternal, all-powerful, and all-knowing, and all-present? It is like untying a knot of Christmas tree lights. But the figure for God also shows arrows pointing out from the circle. That represents how God is always reaching out in love to the world.

That is what we are proclaiming in the Trinity. We speak of God having three “persons.” A “person” was the word used in Greek drama to describe the masks used by actors in a play. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the “masks”, the way God has shown Himself to us. So what do we see? We see the Father who has both the might and the love to take care of us, who lets us pray to Him, “Our Father.” In the Son we see His total self-sacrificing love for us. In the Holy Spirit we see His consistent activity of bringing life to us, life to trust in Him and life to share with others.

The answer to the questions about God is not to study them more closely. The answer is to look at what He has done and continues to do for us, to see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—God in action.