

An Ending is a Beginning

2,000 years after Jesus walked the earth, exploding humanity's understanding of what it means to be God, we still don't know how to make heads or tails of the Christian proclamation that God is Three in One and One in Three. Saints and sages much smarter than me have tried throughout the ages to articulate this Mystery in ways that make sense, but none of them have ever been truly satisfactory. It's a fool's errand, to attempt to grasp the mystery of the Holy Trinity within the boundaries of rationality and intellect. It just doesn't work.

And you know what, I'm totally cool with that. I'm totally cool with not knowing everything there is to know about God. I'm totally cool with admitting my own inability to grasp a Mystery that really and truly *should* be beyond my comprehension. And I'm cool with it because, at the end of the day, it's not my job to make sense of the mysteries of God. At the end of the day, the best thing that I can do is to get caught up in grateful adoration, becoming enraptured in wonder, love, and praise, being thankful that a God beyond my comprehension would desire intimacy with me.

It's like falling in love with another human being. There is simply no way we can know every detail, every facet of the person we love, even if we spend our entire lives with them. As we grow in love, we certainly learn new things, things that may surprise or shock us, things that may leave us scratching our heads, things that may even confound and test our love. But our love remains even as we will never, ever exhaust the mystery that is another human being.

So, why should it be any different with God? Why do we feel the need to understand God's mysteries before we are willing to enter into a relationship of intimate love and vulnerability? The truth is that any God who can be fully understood is not really a God worth

worshipping, is not really much of a God at all. On my arm is tattooed the phrase, ‘Any God that can be killed should be killed.’ It’s a phrase I live by, and one that means that any God who can be fully understood, whose deep mysteries can be articulated and contained by such an insufficient thing as language, is a God worth letting go of as a pale imitation of the real thing. Its foundational beliefs like this one, that God is Three in One and One in Three, that remind us that the truths of God are not our truths. They are not for us to make and mold as we see fit, jettisoning them if they don’t fit into the nice, neat little boxes we create for God. The truths of God are first and foremost gifts, things given to us, things that we receive with a spirit of humility and thankfulness, and awe-filled adoration.

Much like falling in passionate love with a person who still has qualities and facets unknown to us, those first disciples and then the early Christians found themselves caught up in rapturous adoration of a God they confessed to be Three in One and One in Three. And that confession was a response to the movements of God and the experiences they shared of meeting God in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, no matter how much that confession stretched their brains and challenged their faith. As inheritors of the Jewish tradition, their commitment to the God of Israel was unquestionable. And yet, after encountering Jesus of Nazareth, they felt the best way to respond to him was to worship him, to give him their very lives as if they were giving them to God himself.

I’m sure that, during late nights by the fire, some of the disciples stayed up and experienced what Paul speaks of in Romans: *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”* Their hearts were warmed, and pulled, and

expanded by the man from Nazareth. Because of him, they felt that spirit within crying, ‘Abba’, felt their spirit connecting to God in new ways of child-like intimacy and familiarity. He became for them the human face of God, even though they didn’t fully understand just how that came to be. But they were pulled on, drawn by the mystery, drawn by something larger than themselves so that it eventually didn’t matter anymore how Jesus came to be. In him, they met God. They encountered a singularity, a total mixing of Source and Flesh that transcended their limited knowledge of who and what God could be.

Today, we reach the end of our theological horizon. We reach the point where our knowledge falters, fails, and falls away. What’s demanded of us is humility, gratitude, and excitement as we stare into the face of Divine Mystery and continue to seek after a God who cannot be contained by our words, images, ideas, and doctrines. A God who shows us that at the very center of what it means to be God is Mystery, Relationship, and Love.

*Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Let the Spirit blow over you as it wishes. Don’t be anxious grappling over a mystery you ultimately cannot solve. Let yourself fall in love with this divine mystery more and more. Feel yourself drawn towards the beauty of our Triune God. Move past knowledge into deep faith and trust. Let yourself end, and let God begin.*