

Title: "The Upward Dimension: God"
Text: Genesis 1:1-27; Matthew 3:1-16

Last Sunday I introduced a new sermon series for the Fall we're calling, "Living Faith in 3D."

- In essence it's about discovering "how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is,"
- and coming to know and experience that love such that we are "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

This was the Apostle Paul's prayer for God's people everywhere.

- And it is still his prayer for all of us today.

So we are exploring how to become answers to that prayer ourselves.

- Living faith in 3D,
 - upwardly in relationship with God,
 - inwardly in relationship to ourselves
 - and outwardly in relationship with others and with the world around us.

Today we want to focus on the upward dimension of our faith.

- We are looking at God Himself, and how God in Himself is actually three dimensional.

So turn with me to Genesis 1, the very beginning of the Bible which gives us our first introduction to God at creation.

So what I'd like you to notice right off the bat today,

- is that all through this text, God reveals Himself as both singular and plural.
- He is both One and three at the same time.

In verse 1, it says, "In the beginning God (singular) created the heavens and the earth."

- But at the end of the passage in v. 26 when God creates human beings, that "singular" God says:

"Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness."

- God speaks of Himself as "plural," you see.

Christians believe the change happens because God is, was, and always has been the Triune God.

-There are indications of this all over the Old Testament, but it is not until the incarnation of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that this became explicit.

But let's look at the indications of God's triune or 3 dimensional presence here in Genesis 1.

First notice the means by which God sets about doing the work of creation all through the passage:

- He does it by means of His Word.
- He speaks creation into existence.

Do you remember last year how we studied appearances of Jesus in the Old Testament?

- This was one of the first passages we looked at.
- We saw that the Gospel of John proclaims that when God spoke all things into existence, Jesus was that Word by whom and for whom and through whom all things were created.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

You see, John says Jesus actually appears right here at creation as the Word of God by whom all was created.

And then we discover also that the Spirit of God is "hovering over the waters" at creation.

- And it is the Spirit of God by which the Word of God ultimately brings all things into being.
- It's the Trinity, you see? Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- One God existing and acting in 3 dimensions.

A few minutes ago we read the story of Jesus' baptism at the Jordan River.

- There you have another glimpse of the Triune nature of God.
- The Son, Jesus, is being baptized in the Jordan River.

-But at the same time, the Father's voice comes from
Heaven affirming Jesus' son-ship,
"This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am pleased."

-And lo and behold, the Spirit descends like a dove to anoint
and empower the Son to accomplish all that the Father has
sent the Son to do.

Do you see the unity in the Godhead, and the diversity?

-There is one God, but living in 3D: multidimensional.

And so when it comes to us "living faith in 3D,"

-right here at the beginning I want you to see that God Himself
is 3D.

And so it should come as no surprise that everything that the
multidimensional God has created,

-also displays multi-dimensional traits.

-Here in Genesis 1:26-27, when God created humans,

-he made them male and female.

-Both are fully human. We are One in our human-ness.

-But men and women are not the same.

-We are diverse in our human-ness.

-There are things about men that are not true about
women,

-and things about women that are not true of men.

-And that same male-female diversity is common to most
all living things, animals and plants alike.

But not only that, think of how infinite the variety of plants and
animals and humans there are.

-God didn't create just one kind of dog or cat or flower or
tree.

-He created all kinds of species of plants and animals.

And within each species there is a unity and diversity just
like we know is true of God.

-There is a sort of unity about all dogs that makes them
a dog,

-but a think of the difference between a Dachshund
and Great Dane.

You see, all creation displays this combination of unity and diversity.

- It is because all creation displays the glory of our creator.
- God is Triune...a tri-unity.
- We may not be able to fully explain how One God can eternally exist in three persons.
- But there you have it.

And we humans display a little of this "tri-unity" in that each one of us in our one person has a body, soul, and spirit.

- Those three different dimensions are what make us human.
- It what makes us uniquely "made in the image of God."
- We are each one person, but with multiple dimensions.

We will explore what it means for us to be body, soul and spirit in the weeks to come, as we look at the inward and outward dimensions of our lives.

- But for today, let's stick with the upward dimension and explore what it means for us that God is a triune God.
- God is multi-dimensional.

1. And the first thing I'd like confess today is that I know my designation of God as belonging to the "Upward Dimension" of a living Faith is not really very accurate.

God is Himself multidimensional, and guess what?

- whether we explore the "upward dimension" of our lives,
- or the inward dimension of our lives,
- or the outward dimension of our lives, God is there.

God is not really upward.

- As Paul wrote in Ephesians 4, God is the Father of us all and He is "over all and in all and through all."

And a large part of discovering how wide and long and high and deep the love of Christ is,

- is discovering that God in His love meets us everywhere.

So a little disclaimer right here at the outset:

- In speaking of upward, inward, and outward dimensions of a "living faith in 3D,"
- these are not hard and fast categories.

- They are all intertwined and inter-related.
- That's what multidimensional always means.
- All the dimensions co-exist and are interrelated all the time.

2. But the question for us today is: what does it mean for broken people that GOD is multidimensional?

And the answer is found in discovering that all the dimensions of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
-are revealed to us for our salvation and the mending of our brokenness!

On the screen is a famous painting of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead.
-It's a story in the gospels, and it beautifully portrays how the very reason that the Father came from heaven (up there) to earth (down here),
-and revealed Himself to us in bodily form in His Son Jesus was for our healing.
-It was to bring life to broken people.
-It was to mend the brokenness of sin in us.

The Bible tells us it was because God the Father so loved the world, that He sent us His Son,
-so that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.
-God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might have life.

And when the Son had died on a cross for our sin, and ascended into heaven,
-the Father and the Son sent forth the Holy Spirit to be the very presence of God working in us and through us for our sanctification towards wholeness.

The Spirit is revealed to us and given to live in us so that we might grow in grace, and be filled to the measure of the fullness of God.
-The Spirit is given to us so that we might be empowered to grow up and mature.
-That little girl in the painting, once Jesus had raised her from the dead, she had to go on living.

God wasn't done with her yet.

-She had to grow up and mature: physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally, and also spiritually.

That's why the Spirit is given to us.

-To be the very presence of God working in us to mature.

You see, God has revealed all of His dimensions to us for our good, for our salvation.

-God hasn't withheld any part of Himself.

-In fact, He has given Himself to us again and again and again for our life and our salvation.

So my friends, because God is 3D, you and I can experience these amazing benefits:

God the Father is always and forever seated on His throne in heaven,

-sovereignly ruling over all creation.

-You can trust in His sovereignty, and find some rest and peace knowing that as crazy as this world can be,

-and as messed up as the politicians can make it,

-and as great a mess as you and I can make of our own lives,

-God the Father is still working out his great plan of salvation, by which He is going to restore and redeem all things.

-And He promises those who love Him, that He is going to work "all things" in our lives together for good, too.

-All things.

And God the Son is always and forever at the right hand of the Father interceding for us as our Mediator.

-He has already died as an atoning sacrifice for our sins, once and for all.

-He has already lived a perfect life of obedience and true righteousness, fulfilling all of the law of God on our behalf.

-And so He now is always and forever standing by the Father's side representing us before the throne.

-By placing our trust and hope in Him, we are then counted as being "in Him."

And God the Holy Spirit is then enabled to come and dwell within us.

-He is the very presence of God "with us."

-So that you and I might know that God is not only "up there" ruling on His throne,

-but is also right here, working out His will and His ways in our lives.

-It is by the Spirit, that all of the merits of what Jesus the Son has done for us are actually applied to our lives.

-It is the Spirit who continues that every-day-sanctifying work in us,

-helping us grow from babes in Christ to mature sons and daughters of the living God.

That's what it means for broken people that God is multi-dimensional.

And God wants you and me, in all of the dimensions of our lives, to experience His love in all of its dimensions.

He is your heavenly Father, who created you,

-and who loved you so much that He sent His only begotten Son so that if you would put your trust in Him, you would not perish but have everlasting life.

-And when you put your faith in His Son, God gives you His very own Spirit to dwell within you.

All of the dimensions of who God is, He freely gives to you and me.

-And when He calls us to love Him back with all of our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength,

-he is calling us to respond to His great love with all of the dimensions of who we are.

None of us are perfectly able to do that.

-But Jesus the Son has already done it for us, on our behalf.

-and is even now before the throne of God representing us.

-And God the Holy Spirit is working in us, helping us to mature in all of our dimensions.

-It's a work in progress that we want to lend ourselves to more and more.

-Let us pray.