

June 15, 2014
Sermon for The Holy Trinity
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Matthew 28:16-20, (ESV)

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen.

In addition to this being Trinity Sunday, it is also Father's day. I have been looking forward to this Sunday since Mother's Day. Wondering in which direction that I would be led for the sermon, but then as I sat down to put the outline together for this sermon, thinking of all of the things that I could say about the blessings that there are in being a father, I also began to look at the other side too.

Oh, I'm not talking about the hardships and minor disappointments of being a father. That is part and parcel with the job. And the blessings that I have received from being a father have far outweighed those. I wouldn't trade any of my children for the world.

No my friends, I'm talking about some of the biggest mistakes that I have ever made in my life have come from me being a father. As many times as I have let my children down, I have let myself down even more. Tempers being lost, promises forgotten, being too busy or too tired to play...maybe that is why my Father's Day sermons tend to be law orientated; preachy and teachy towards fathers while Mother's Day sermons are sweeter, more praising. I look at and preach to myself.

But no matter how many times I felt like I failed my children, they still love me. Why, I don't know. I do my best to apologize for things that I do or have fallen short at, and they forgive me, sometime even when I don't ask. Wow.

Isn't forgiveness a marvelous thing? Undeserved forgiveness. From our children, and especially from our ultimate Father. Your Father who is in heaven.

You know, He is our role model for being an earthly father. Maybe that's why it's so hard to fill His shoes. Your heavenly Father never fails you, and when you fail, He always forgives you.

Our Trinity Sunday Gospel ends with the Great Commission, and this commission come from the Trinity, the Triune God.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt 28:10-20)

This is God's plan for forgiveness. As my confirmands probably got tired of repeating when we studied the Apostles Creed, 1. God the Father creates, 2, God the Son, redeems, 3 God the Holy Spirit, sanctifies or makes holy.

So, on this day, we celebrate who God is: The Holy Trinity, one God composed of three persons.

We do not worship three gods, but One. We do not worship one God who puts on three different masks to deal with us; we worship three distinct persons of the one God--the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It may well strike you as a strange sort of celebration for a couple of reasons. First, we usually celebrate an event in someone's life, like a birthday or a promotion; however, we rarely celebrate the personhood of someone--you likely haven't had a party held for you just because you're you.

Similarly, at Church, it makes sense to celebrate what God has done, as we do with festivals like Christmas and Easter; but it seems a bit different to celebrate who He is.

Second, we usually celebrate things that we can understand: I, for one, do not celebrate the discovery of the latest chemical element because I do not understand such things, nor do I realize their significance. They may be very important; I just don't know. So also it is with the Trinity:

Today we celebrate what we cannot comprehend--the persons and identity of God. We know He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for He tells us. But beyond that, His being defies our logic.

And that's the Festival of the Trinity: We celebrate God for who He is, even though we cannot comprehend Him. It's no wonder some might consider this a dud holiday in the Church year. They don't bother to look at the Trinity. They've thrown out the Athanasian Creed because its just too long and boring, no one wants to read that. However, there is good reason that we celebrate today that we believe in one God--the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Human beings are always tempted to set aside what they cannot fully understand: How terrible it would be if we set aside the very identity of God.

You see, if we do not believe in the Trinity, we declare that the Word of God is wrong; and if the Word of God is wrong, we can no longer trust that our salvation is secure. If we do not believe in the Trinity, then we believe in a false god: God the Father is just a another god out there somewhere, and Jesus was just some guy; therefore, the price has not been paid for our salvation.

Our sins are not forgiven, and we're in deep trouble.

The Trinity is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith.

Remember I said that God, is the ultimate role model for earthly Fathers? Well look at what He does. God the Father provides all good things for this body and life, as well as for eternity, as earthly fathers are called to do.

For you, God the Son has gone to the cross and died for your salvation, and continues to give you forgiveness by His means of grace. Earthly fathers are called to sacrifice everything if needed, for their children too.

For you, God the Holy Spirit continues to call, gather, enlighten and sanctify you with the forgiveness of sins, that you might remain a member of the one, holy Christian Church. Earthly fathers, as spiritual heads of the household, are to bring their children to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to be baptized, to make sure their family knows who their Savior is.

We rejoice this day in the Holy Trinity, and we gratefully acknowledge that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are still at work to make disciples through Baptism and Word of God. We give thanks that the Lord has made us His through our Baptism, and that He continues to strengthen us by His Word and Supper.

This, dear friends, is your cause for rejoicing: The all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present Father, Son and Holy Spirit have made you Their disciple. They have washed away your sins and declare your salvation.

And fathers, this is why you can continue day by day.

No matter how many times you may have fallen short, know that as you repent, so you are forgiven.

Every child naturally loves their father. Through faith in Christ as your Savior, following the leadings of the Holy Spirit who works within you, can begin anew. If there is a rift between you and your children, whether it is your fault or theirs, make that connection, show them the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The works of man cannot save you, but the work of the Holy Trinity can; Through Faith in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Sermon Outline
The Holy Trinity
Matthew 28:16-20

- I. God's plan for forgiveness.
- II. Why celebrate Trinity Sunday?
- III. The Trinity is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity.