

“That’s Worth Celebrating!” A sermon by Lee Ireland
Cathedral City Community Presbyterian Church
June 11, 2017 Pentecost
Matthew 28:16-20

Prayer: Open our eyes to see your Spirit in our life. Open our hearts to receive the blessings you send each day. Guide us with your wisdom so that through us Christ may walk on the earth once again. Amen.

It’s Trinity Sunday! The Sunday we celebrate the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aren’t you excited? Don’t you just look forward to this day with anticipation – like you do for Christmas or Easter? Wait. I don’t see too many excited faces out there. The day we celebrate the three facets of our Triune God – you’re not jumping up and down in the pews!?

I really don’t blame you. Each of you has your joys and your own issues and problems that are of concern to you, be it personal, family, the state of the world or the state of the United States. What you probably came to church today to hear is that God cares for you, that God knows who you are, knows what’s going on in your life and what you need. You came to be reassured and to thank God for God’s care and concern for you and for all humanity.

Discussing the Trinity, our Triune God, may not seem to be relevant to most of you. It’s one of those theological concepts that is hard to grasp. It’s a mystery how God can be three persons in one. If you’re not turned on by a thorough discussion of the Trinity, then you’re not alone!

PAUSE

I mentioned that you probably came to church today to be reassured and to thank God for God’s care and concern for you and for all humanity. Let’s take a brief look today at how the three persons of our God delivers that care and concern.

In today’s scripture, Jesus tells the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What would be different about our God if we just baptized in the name of the Father? Besides sounding strange to us, it would completely miss the work of Jesus and the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit. You would only know a creative, powerful, mysterious God – the God of the Old Testament.

What if you were just baptized in the name of Jesus? We’d miss the part of God that is mysterious, that is a powerful, creative God. That is a God beyond our logic and reason. We’d also miss the Holy Spirit that inspires, leads and guides us.

What if you were just baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit? We’d miss the awesomeness and creativity of God the Father and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, God in human flesh. We’d miss the part of God who rose from the dead to show God’s love for us.

It’s difficult to think about our God without thinking about all three aspects of God. We, as believers, need all three persons of the Trinity. It is through those three persons that we know we are cared for and loved. It is because of the Trinity that we can have hope in

spite of our problems and issues. We can go on living knowing we have the power of God behind us to depend on. It is because of our Triune God that we can do what God wants us to do with our lives.

Let me illustrate. When Jesus told the disciples “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” what logical person living in Jesus’ day would think Jesus a stable personality. There were only eleven followers on that mountain with Jesus, not a crowd hanging on his every word. Eleven, not much of a church. And not all those eleven believed. The scripture is quite plain. It says that ‘some doubted.’ For most people then, Jesus surroundings and followers would certainly not support his words, all authority.

What comes next? Jesus tells the disciples to go and ‘make disciples of all nations.’ Jesus is telling the disciples to turn Gentiles into Christ-followers. What would you think if you heard this directive from Jesus? “Me? Leave my job and home? Go to a foreign country? Spread the news about Jesus? How could I do all those things? It’s impossible!” I would imagine that little band of confused and disoriented disciples may have said the same thing.

As you know well, a task that seemed impossible happened – or you and I would not be sitting in this church today. The disciples did the impossible. They spread the Gospel of Jesus’ and God’s love to all the world. However, they could not have done it all by themselves. If they tried, they would have failed.

The disciples did succeed. How? By depending on the Holy Spirit to inspire them, by remembering and telling others about the teachings of Jesus, by drawing their strength for their mission from God. They were able to follow through on Jesus’ directive for their lives by depending on the mercy and strength of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, our Triune God.

Which brings me back to where we started. Each of you have your own joys and issues. What you probably came to church today to hear is that God cares for you, that God knows who you are, knows what’s going on in your life and what you need. You may have come to church to thank God for all your blessings and to make sure you’re heading in the right direction, that you’re living a life pleasing to God. You may not be quite sure of that direction or how to proceed. The disciples were in the same boat as many of us.

Yet, by depending on God, the disciples found strength, energy and power to do the task that Jesus directed them to do. They found strength to arrange their lives so they could live a life pleasing to God. They could not have done it by themselves. They depended on Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

By depending on God as the disciples did, that same strength, energy and power is available to each of you and me to live our lives in a manner that is pleasing to God. So, you’ve come to the right place today, this Trinity Sunday, to be reassured and to thank God for God’s care and concern for you and for all humanity.

I don’t know about you, but I think that’s something worth celebrating this Trinity Sunday.