

Sermon Transcript for Trinity Sunday, May 30, 2021

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

We have this marvelous opportunity to study the Trinity. Now the last several weeks, we have been finishing up the Easter season. Now, of course, we always celebrate Easter, the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. That is the focus, the core of our faith. If we do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, then our faith is worthless. So we have been spending a lot of time really focusing, reemphasizing and understanding what that means to have Jesus die on the cross. And then last week we have Pentecost, and Pentecost is really the birth of the church. It is a time when the disciples became apostles, in essence. They went from learners and students to teachers, and it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that they were enabled to do that. That is the person of the Trinity that perhaps we understand the least, is that Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit came to them. You can see something of what happened with Isaiah when the coal was taken off of the altar and burned his lips, because he thought that he felt like, and he was right, that he was an unclean man and he lived amongst an unclean people. And God symbolically cleanses him through that coal that burns away the sin, in essence, and allows him to speak the Word of God in purity. In many ways, it's the same thing with the disciples. Their muddled thoughts and ideas and all the teaching that had been going on for the three years with Jesus and the special focus that He had been given right before He died, all of it through the power of the Holy Spirit, burned through the chaos and the cobwebs in their minds and put everything together so that they were able to speak with power and authority, not their own power and authority, but the power and authority of God. It is God that is speaking through them, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It has always been God that is working. And so through their preaching, through the power of the Holy Spirit, connected with the Word of God, 3000 people come to faith, and that is the beginning, the birth of the church.

So we've been focusing from Advent all the way through Pentecost, in essence, on the life of Christ. And now from Trinity Sunday on to the beginning of Advent again, we now focus upon the life of the church. Now that we have seen the life of Christ and what He has done for us, and we've heard the Holy Spirit coming to help us understand and to give us faith, now we go, "Then what does it mean to be a church? How do we live as church? What are we supposed to do?" Well, the first Sunday that follows after that, is a Sunday about the Trinity, because the first thing that we need to do to live as church, is to understand the definition of what it is that we believe. There's a lot of people out there who say, "Lord, Lord," or "I believe in Jesus," but they mean somebody completely different than who we mean. They believe in somebody completely different than what the Word of God describes, because the Word of God

describes this Trinity. There's God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And we have Jesus Christ, when He tells us to make disciples, He says, "Go and make disciples of all nations." How? "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." So Jesus makes it known that the name of God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It's the fullness of the deity of God and it has always been that way.

One of the most problematic arguments or heresies, false teachings in the church, has been this idea that Jesus Christ is not fully God. There was a huge battle that went on in the Council of Nicea between a man named Arius and a man named Athanasius. And from the arguments of Athanasius and his firm standing on the faith of the Scriptures, we get the Athanasian Creed. Now Athanasius did not write it, but his theology, his teaching from Scripture, inspired what eventually became labeled as the Athanasian Creed. And this creed makes it very clear that the God that we worship is Trinity and unity, that it's one God in three persons and that's what we mean. One God in three persons. Now how in the world can that be? I don't know. I can't explain it. All I have is the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit that says the Spirit is God, the Son is God, and the Father is God. Therefore, that is what I know and that is what I confess. Now that has been the case from the very beginning. We hear about the Trinity all the way back in Genesis Chapter One. The Trinity is there. We have the Father who is overseeing all of creation. We have the Spirit of God that is hovering over the waters. And then we have the Word of God which speaks and things come into existence. The Father, the Son, Holy Spirit, already in Genesis One, that Trinity is there. Now did Adam and Eve fully understand it? Did Moses fully understand it? No, but they believed in the same God that we believe in today. The Lord your God is one, but even then the word Lord there, or the word God in that phrase, the Lord your God is one, it is the ultimate statement of faith in the Old Testament. If you can say that, then you are a member of God. You are a part of the family of God. But the Lord your God, that word God is actually plural and yet they define it as singular. Now again, logically, it doesn't make any sense, but it is the nature of God to be larger and greater and more profound than you and I could possibly understand. And let's face it, if I could fully understand God, if I could really completely and totally explain what I believe about God and what I know about God, and how this is a full picture of God, if I were able to give you a full picture of God, I would be giving you a picture of a very puny God, because I have a very puny brain. And I just cannot wrap my head around the fullness of the majesty and the glory of God, which is what Romans is saying here. What Paul is saying, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable are His ways. Now who has known the mind of God or been His counselor?" Now that means there's a lot that I can't understand. I can't understand how God works. I can't understand His will and His ways, except for what He has revealed to us in the Scriptures. And this great and

profound majesty and mystery of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, who appears to Moses in the desert with a burning bush, Moses stands before it and he hears the Word of God and what is that Word? That is Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. And you have Elijah being carried by the Spirit. You have Isaiah talking about the Spirit of God. There's multiple places in the Old Testament where the Spirit of God is the actor. And every time you hear God speak, that is the Word of God. And John makes it very clear that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. It might be hard for us to wrap around, but every time you hear God speak, that is the Son of God. The second person in the Trinity, even back in the Old Testament, He's always been God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It just became crystal clear what was meant by that when Jesus Christ came.

I was talking about that fight between Athanasius and Arius and it really was over the nature of Jesus Christ. Is He really God, or is He a man who God liked a lot and caused Him to become God? Or is He a secondary-tiered person or creation? And most of the church agreed with Arius that Jesus Christ was not really completely and utterly God. And Athanasius, though, won the day, brought the entire church back to his way of thinking. Why? Because Athanasius was such a great speaker and orator and was convincing in his logic and reason? No. It was because Athanasius knew the Word of God and spoke the Word of God and insisted that the Word of God was the only source and norm for understanding who God was. And so we insist upon going back to what His Word says, because without the solid foundation of the Word of God, we can say almost anything. And if we say it convincing enough, a lot of people might believe us, but it doesn't matter how convincing we are, how eloquent we are, how rational it may sound. If it does not agree with the Word of God, it is false. And we need to understand that, so we go to our creeds where we have a structure that we can look at and say, "Ah, that is right. That falls in line with the Word of God." It's been hammered out. So we have this great mystery and yet in this mystery, the God whose judgments are unsearchable and whose ways are inscrutable makes us confident of our salvation, because the message that He gives to us, this incomprehensible, majestic and holy and mighty and awesome God communicates to us like this, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." Simple, straightforward, no ambiguity.

We can stand firm on this Word because He has given it to us and we know it to be true because He is the same today, yesterday and forever. May the God of all grace, the love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, unto life everlasting. Amen.