

# TRINITY SUNDAY

**June 11 2017**

Old Test: Isaiah 6:1-7

Epistle: Rom. 11:33-36

Gospel: John 3:1-15

## ***Standing...***

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

The Christian faith is built on a paradox:

God is One, and He is three.

Those three Persons are distinct, yet they share one divine essence.

Those three Persons are very different, yet we confess God as One:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It's a bit of mind-bender.

Though this confession is made here numerous times every Sunday—  
today, we place special emphasis upon it.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

## ***Sitting...***

The Athanasian Creed gives us a thorough explanation of the Trinity,  
but even it falls flat.

It was compiled in response to errors  
which crept into the Church.

Some were trying to make sense of God with their own ideas  
rather than accepting what God revealed about Himself in Holy Scriptures.

So the Creed was to confront the false teachings.

But when you come to the end of it, two thoughts emerge:

First, humankind would never invent a God such as this.

And second, the Holy Trinity is a mystery.

However, just because we come upon a mystery,  
doesn't mean we throw Christianity out with the bathwater.

For example, there are quite a number of mysteries concerning God—  
things that don't make total sense.

I mean, can you explain the Incarnation—  
how true God becomes true man? I doubt it.

You believe it—confess it—but fully explain it?

It's a mystery.

What about how about how Christ's death satisfies the full wrath of the Almighty God,  
or that how the blood which flows from Jesus' pierced side has made atonement for  
every last one of your sins—including the sins of the whole world.

If that weren't enough, this same blood flows into the chalice for you, for the  
forgiveness of your sins. Talk about a mystery...

What about the water that flows from Jesus' pierced side—and how that water flows  
into the baptismal font making baptism a true washing away of sin.

God connects promises to things we can see, touch and taste.

And just because we can't fully understand or adequately explain that doesn't mean we  
throw it out. There are some things we simply believe by faith and the Holy Trinity is  
one of them.

Now, it shouldn't surprise any of us that God's Being is magnificent—  
that He is incomprehensible—  
beyond our understanding.

That was referred to in our Epistle reading.

Understanding all there is to know about God is above our pay grade

But what we can understand is that God is for you, not just one time, in One Person, not  
just two times in Two Persons, but He is for you three times—Father, Son and Holy  
Spirit.

Jehovah's Witnesses love to tell people that the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible,  
but what they fail to realize is that God's Triune nature is replete in Scripture.

Deuteronomy 6:4—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one." That cuts against all of  
the pagans with their countless gods. So we start there. God is one—yet the Son prays  
to the Father, so the Son is distinct from the Father and the Father is distinct from the

Son. The Father and the Son send out the Holy Spirit, so the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son.

A prominent text on the Trinity is Matthew 28—"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them..."

Then there's our Gospel reading this morning where Nicodemus is struggling with the notion of being born from above. Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity—talks about how He came from God the Father and He also talks about the Holy Spirit who causes us to be born from above. Three Persons in one passage—all of which are referred to as God.

There's I Corinthians 13,  
 one of the various benedictions we use in our liturgy. It reads,  
 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 The love of God  
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

We add all of this together—and many other verses—to see, God is one, and yet there are these three distinct Persons.

This reminds me:

Recently, I was invited to enjoy a Nascar Truck race at the Kansas Motor Speedway.  
 North Carolina is the home of Nascar—so I felt right at home.  
 I was with President Lange and we got there in plenty of time.

We situated ourselves in our seats,  
 eventually rising for the National Anthem and Opening Prayer.  
 The prayer offered was for the usual:  
 the safety of the drivers,  
 and for the rain to hold off.  
 Thanksgivings were then made:  
 for all the hard work the boys in the shop had put in  
 and for the dedicated fans who filled the seats.

To conclude, the man praying said,  
 "We ask all these things in Your Name—Amen."  
 And like an involuntary reflex,  
 President Lange and I turned to one another and asked, "Whose Name?"  
 Exactly in whose name were we praying?

It was never specified.  
It could have been whomever one wanted it to be.

Oh, c'mon Pastor—don't you know when someone prays, "In Your Name"—they're all talking about the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Well, if you say so ...

But what's wrong with beginning your prayers—  
not ending them—but beginning them—  
in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

What's wrong with beginning your day—  
making the sign of the cross—  
saying, "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?"

What's wrong with ending your day the same way,  
using the same Name?

The Name He's given you.

Gang, use His most Holy Name—but do so reverently.

Use this Name He has placed upon the forehead and heart of sinners.

Doing so by means of the Holy Spirit and baptismal waters—

That's what it means to be born from above,  
just as our Lord told Nicodemus.

Beloved, there is no richer crown than God's own Holy Name  
a crown He's placed on your forehead.

We do not believe nor worship a generic, benign, Supreme Being.

We believe in the One God,

the Father—who has created and sustains your life,  
and yet...and yet, He is the One who knows your sin,  
putting a plan in place for your salvation.

We believe in the Son,

who fulfilled the Father's plan—dying on the cross,  
satisfying the justice of God so as to redeem you.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit—

sent by the Father and the Son to create and sustain faith in you,  
the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you and makes you holy.

Just as the angel came and touched Isaiah's mouth with a live coal taken from the altar, saying, "Behold this has touched your lips—your iniquity is taken away—your sin is purged."

So also we are given to receive from His altar the living body and blood of Christ, even more cleansing than a hot coal.

By His Body your sins are purged—taken away.  
By His Blood your sins are taken away.

Sure—God in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to keep the glorious miracle of the Trinity a mystery. But what He has revealed is all you need to know to be saved.

Know that...  
Every day the Heavenly Father protects you.  
Every day your brother Jesus Christ stands with you.  
And every day the Holy Spirit who loves you so,  
guides you into life and to love.

And those Three—that One Triune God—  
will bring you home again someday.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

### ***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### ***Sitting...***

Hymn 786