

6/19/2019

“Guided Into Truth with Love”

John 16:12-15; Romans 5:1-5

Trinity Sunday

Theme: Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us, and a hope that does not disappoint us. And we are guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, into all truth from God.

Romans 5:1-5 (NRSV)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.³ And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

† **Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1)**

Today is Father's Day, as said earlier in our service. As one of the Hallmarks of a Healthy Family, as noted in your bulletin states: “The healthy family has a good sense of humor and the capacity to be playful.” So, I thought I'd start off with something a little on the lighter side about dads. . .

A father was enjoying a day on the beach with his young son. As they were walking along the beach, they came across a dead bird. The boy pointed to it and asked his father "Dad, what happened to this bird?" The dad coolly replied "Oh this? He just died and went to Heaven." The little boy thought for a moment, and then said, "Oh my, did God throw him back down?" ☺

Well, as fathers, we know that we can have some very interesting or challenging questions asked of us. And even when we think we have the right answers, we have to take into consideration the developmental stage or other considerations of our children. We also have to accept, and often confess, that we may have some of the answers, but not all of them. We may have some of the truth or knowledge, and our own truth or wisdom from experience. But that may not be the full story, or all the truth, knowledge, wisdom, and other things that our children are looking for or need. And that is OK.

Hopefully, we can give them what really is important and matters most in life – a foundation of love, peace, patience, wisdom, knowledge and other blessings that come from being in a close relationship with the One who gave us earthly life and offers us and gives us new and everlasting spiritual life!

We, too, might have questions of, for, or about God. Does God exist? Does God love me? Does God care for me? Will God protect me and provide for me? Will God receive me if I turn again to Him?

Friends, the good news to all of these questions is YES!

You see, we don't have to earn our right and good relationship with God. Jesus, the Son, has restored it by his life, death and resurrection. Though humankind was at odds with our Heavenly Father, Jesus came to this earth to restore that broken relationship. All we need do is believe and accept God's grace.

As Paul said:

“Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.”

It doesn't matter how much you know or not. It doesn't matter how far you have strayed or what you have or haven't done. It only matters that you turn and have faith, that you put your trust in him. God gives us forgiveness, mercy and peace.

That being said, we have even more to learn and grow and are called to further faith and action. We have the hope of sharing in God's glory, of being part of God's kingdom. But that comes from God's love. And it also comes from our spiritual growth, often born out of suffering, endurance, and character. There are many witnesses of this in the New Testament, as well as in the body of Christ, the church universal, in every age, even to this day.

As Paul says . . .

† God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us, and a hope that does not disappoint us. (Rom. 5:5)

As much as I appreciated and still value my own father's provision, knowledge, wisdom, love and example, I came to value that of God, our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus, even more. Indeed, I am ever thankful to God that I had such an earthly father. And

while some may not be as fortunate, ALL can acknowledge our truly loving Heavenly Father.

And just as my earthly father poured out his love in so many ways, our Heavenly Father does all the more perfectly and wonderfully.

All this comes from the Holy Spirit, present at the beginning of all creation. The Spirit of God which gave word and power to the prophets of old. The Spirit that descended upon Jesus at his baptism. The Spirit that came down upon the disciples gathered in the Upper Room, as we celebrated last Sunday. It is that same Spirit whom Jesus promised, and was sent from the Father to be an Advocate, a Comforter, a guide for all believers.

Today is also observed by many of us in the Christian faith as Trinity Sunday, to affirm and honor the unity – or Oneness – of the Triune God. That is, one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although the Holy Bible is considered the authoritative source of Christian theology or belief and speaks of these three “persons” in different ways, it does not specifically refer to a “Trinity”.

We do know and affirm that it strongly declares that “God is one,” that there is only one Eternal God (Dt. 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5 and others), as witnessed to in the Hebrew Scriptures, of whom Jesus often referred to as Father. And the New Testament refers to Jesus as the Son of God (Luke 1:35), and of the Holy Spirit of God, using both impersonal and personal expressions. So early Christians of the first two centuries and later, often differed on their understanding and belief about the Holy Trinity.

But we are given the good news and truth by Jesus himself, that we are not alone.

† **We are guided by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, into all truth from God.
(John 16:12-13 NRSV)**

Jesus said . . .

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” (John 16:12-13 NRSV)

We believe that the Holy Spirit did just that as the early apostles and others shared their witness of God’s love in and through Jesus the Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit did just that as the church, the body of Christ universal, continued to ask questions about

God, the reality in which they lived, and their faith. This was wonderfully revealed in the Revelation to John during a time of great persecution, and even beyond as followers of Jesus sought truth.

I believe that the Holy Spirit continues to teach, guide and lead us in ways of God's love, wisdom, faith, justice, and peace. And I believe that we are still called to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

Let me close with a story from today's devotional from **The Upper Room**, by Wil I. Jackson of North Carolina. Although the cultural context is considerably different, it reminded me of the times I spent with my father growing up as well.

Speaking of "Our Father's Business," he writes . . .

"My father taught his children many valuable lessons – the foremost being that we were to revere the name of God at all times and to honor the love and unity of our family. From the time I was very young, my father seemed to place a great amount of trust in me. In the safe and secure environment of our little town, he would send me to the bank to deposit sums of cash from the sales generated at his place of business. Within two months after my sixteenth birthday, having received my driver's license, my father allowed me to drive 120 miles to an out-of-state city to pick up supplies from the headquarters of his company. It felt good to "be about my father's business," to represent him in what I thought to be important affairs.

"For years now," he writes, "I have also represented my heavenly Father's business – the most important in the world. It amazes me that God entrusts the affairs and cares of the human soul to us disciples. Though for years I preached sermons with words from the pulpits of churches, today I preach with my daily words and actions."

Friends, we preach and teach our children, and God's children each day, with our words and actions -- whether at home, school, work, church or community. Let us always remember to do so guided into and by God's truth with love!

And may God bless you and yours, now and always! Amen.

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Questions for Reflection:

What questions do you have for God?

How do you take time and listen to God?

How do you experience the Holy Spirit?