

John 16:12-15

Today is Trinity Sunday.... Dedicated to the 3 in 1 God, a concept that remains a complete mystery. If you remember Schoolhouse Rock, those short blurbs that taught important concepts about life set to music, Schoolhouse Rock had a song about 3. It starts out: "3 is a magic number. Somewhere in the ancient mystic trinity you get 3 as a magic number. The past and the present and the future, faith and hope and charity, the heart and the brain and the body, they give you 3 that's a magic number." Well, I don't know about magic, but I definitely believe in the mystery of 3, "Father, Son, Holy Spirit", "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer", a community reflected in our lives as God, others, self.

Do you remember Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit could not come to them until he returned to heaven? And here he's telling them that the Spirit does not speak on his own but only will speak what he hears. With this we understand it is what he hears through God. Why can't the Spirit speak on his own? It takes the full Trinity to reveal what is needed to be told. The 3 work together as one, in relationship, in community. Jesus didn't stop with the Holy Spirit, however. He went on to say the Spirit would glorify him (Jesus) by receiving the words of Jesus and making them known to the disciples. By doing so, he established the relationship between himself and the Holy Spirit. Still, there was more to come.

He said something very telling in verse fifteen: "All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you." So the Holy Spirit receives from Jesus "all that belongs to the Father" because all that belongs to the Father belongs to Jesus as well. The Spirit, in turn, makes these things known to the apostles in order to glorify Jesus. What we end up with is a covenant relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are a community within themselves, but they are one God. They are independent yet interdependent.

They are, obviously, three different persons; but they are not three different Gods. The early church had no other way to describe this relationship within one God as three distinct persons in one being (or of one substance). If you understand all that, you're doing better than most of us. It the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

In our humanity we have a relationship of three, body, mind, and soul. Throughout my studies over the past couple of years it has been stressed that we are to think not only about the mind, but about how the body is affected and even how the soul is affected when a person is struggling with mental health. One of the newer findings in mental health, especially with war veterans, is moral injury, what happens to a person when they have to work against their values, how they incorporate that dissonance into their lives, and the difficulties encountered when they return to civilian life. The soul is finally being recognized by psychology as a valid part of the human existence that needs to be healed when it has been wounded. Body, mind, and soul, three living together as one individual person.

Past, present and future, something we encounter in daily life. We all have a past, some of us are prouder of our past than others, but most everyone has some skeleton hidden in their closet. What is most important is that God doesn't hold our past against us but allows us to be reconciled through Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Which leads to the present, where the Holy Spirit may be deep at work within us, convicting us of your sin, bringing us to Christ who is forgiving our sin, allowing us to be accepted in the presence of God. And our future, we can plan for our future, but we really don't know how our future will materialize,

and that may not be a bad thing. If we were made aware of everything the future holds, we most likely would not be able to grasp it, to deal with it. So the future is played out as it unfolds. Past, present, future, 3 tenses of one life.

Faith, hope, and charity other wise known as “faith, hope, and love” comes to us from the 13th Chapter of 2nd Corinthians and goes on to say, “but the greatest of these is love”. God is love. We receive our faith from God, we receive our hope from God, and we love because God loves us. Faith, hope, and love, 3 parts of the Christian life.

God, others, ourselves. We love because God loves us. How do we know that God loves us? How do you know that God loves you? Because he created a perfect world where Adam and Eve thrived, and God walked with them physically present daily. But they weren’t satisfied with what they had, they were tempted by Satan to reach for what they were told not to take, they disobeyed. There were consequences to their actions, and they were sent into a harsh world where nothing was freely given. Centuries later after God had given people tons of opportunities to reconcile themselves with God, but they failed, God was ready, in the fullness of time, to send his son into the world so that we can be in communion with God. Humanity didn’t accept Jesus as the Son of God, and he was hung on a cross and died. But God makes the best out of the worst circumstances, it was in God’s perfect plan of salvation that the only human who was acceptable for sacrifice under the Jewish law, the only perfect human, the only human without sin, died so that we can be reconciled with God, to live in the presence of God. Not only in some future condition, but here, now in this part of our life.

Brett Blair writes “We affirm a belief in the Son, Jesus Christ. We say that God took on human form, came and lived among us, suffered the same trials that we suffered, experienced the same Feelings that we experienced. Jesus was purely human and purely divine. Jesus was God incarnate.”

Blair goes on to say that “Soren Kierkegaard, the great Danish theologian of another century tells a story of a prince who wanted to find a maiden suitable to be his queen. One day while running an errand in the local village for his father he passed through a poor section. As he glanced out the windows of the carriage his eyes fell upon a beautiful peasant maiden. During the ensuing days he often passed by the young lady and soon fell in love. But he had a problem. How would he seek her hand?

He could order her to marry him. But even a prince wants his bride to marry him freely and voluntarily and not through coercion. He could put on his most splendid uniform and drive up to her front door in a carriage drawn by six horses. But if he did this he would never be certain that the maiden loved him or was simply overwhelmed with all of the splendor. As you might have guessed, the prince came up with another solution. He would give up his kingly robe. He moved, into the village, entering not with a crown but in the garb of a peasant. He lived among the people, shared their interests and concerns, and talked their language. In time the maiden grew to love him for who he was and because he had first loved her.

This very simple, almost child like story, written by one of the most brilliant minds of our time explains what we Christians mean by the incarnation. God came and lived among us. I am glad that this happened for two reasons. One, it shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is with us, that he is on our side, and that he loves us. Secondly, it gives us a first hand view of what the mind of God is really all about. When people ask what God is like, we as Christians point to the person of Jesus Christ. God himself is incomprehensible. But in Jesus Christ we get

a glimpse of his glory. In the person of Jesus we are told that God, that mysterious other that created the stars and the universe, is willing to go all of the way, to be one of us, talk our language, eat our food, share our suffering die on a cross. Why? So that a single person, you, me, might be redeemed.” (Brett Blair sermons.com)

Jesus took our sin upon himself and conquered death so that we don't have to be afraid, because there is more than this life. We were created to be in community with God. The best way to demonstrate our community with God is to live in community with others here, now. And to expand the community which surrounds us by being so excited about what God has done for us and is doing for us, by loving and enjoying our church so much that we are excited to tell others about what is happening here in our church, how our church is reaching out to others to bring Jesus to them. How we as a community are honoring God through our worship and through our lives.

There is magic in the number 3 after all: it grows in triplicate. Father, Son, Holy Spirit; God, others, us; allowing the triune God to work in us in such a way that the number of others increases. Are you willing?

All Glory be to God.