

Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 28:16-20
June 11, 2017
St. George's Bolton
Fr. Chris

Meeting God

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Easter, though recent, was 50 days ago or so. Hard to believe, because it seems just like last Sunday. Time is flying by. Last Sunday we celebrated the Pentecost, and now in the order of things, we have reached the end of the story and the departure of Jesus. Wait, that was the Ascension! He had to leave before the gift of the Holy Spirit could be bestowed. Yet the readings have brought us to the very end of the Gospel Story: the final words of the farewell of Jesus. And how do those words end?

“I am with you always.”

Trinity Sunday is a celebration of theology and revelation, which is to say in simpler words, what we have come to know and understand and believe about God.

God has been revealed as the powerful creator of the world and the maker of the first Covenant with human beings, the Israelites of the First Testament of the Bible. There was the Rainbow as a symbol of Covenant, in which God pledged not to

destroy the world by a massive flood again. Then came the Law, the Ten Commandments of God about how human beings ought to live in this creation God prepared for us. The Israelites, who were persecuted, oppressed and enslaved in Egypt, now become the chosen people to whom God will reveal God's Self over time. This oppressed people will become a powerful and great nation in the Middle East and in the World. Why does it seem people come to hate those who have been oppressed and enslaved after they gain their freedom? Why are we suspicious of them? One wonders, especially since they are the cradle of our faith in Western Civilization.

God has been revealed in one person who walked the earth in Palestine 2,000 years ago. This individual fulfilled and completed the revelation of who God is and of what God wants: *Love one another as I have loved you; God is a lover and is the embodiment of love.* Jesus embodied the love of God.

God is also pure spirit. We came from the Spirit of God and we are called to return to the Spirit of God. An ember of God is in each of us, and the small flame you held during the sermon last week by Phil Hovey symbolized this. This ember inspires us, makes us hungry for this greater Spirit which is God. *Low, I am with you to the close of the age!* The water of Baptism is a visible symbol of our participation in and life in the Holy Spirit.

Not three Gods, but one God revealed in three ways to us: yet the same God in all three ways. We are easily distracted when we think of God as three distinct people. No. Not the case. Who is with us to the end of the age? God. Who is Jesus? God. Who is the Holy Spirit? God.

God has been pushed to the edge of our consciousness by our self referential, self important, busy modern culture, where community was once ascendant and vital and central to whom we were. Now, even the family does not take precedent over the good and needs of *me*. At some level, we know and I hope suspect this does not work.

So what we are talking about today is what is the truth about God. The truth can be an elusive thing. Sometimes we know it in our hearts, and we know this because when we hear it, it resonates with a kernel of truth from our own experience of the world and other people.

The *Truth* often comes down to what you believe, and what you believe often comes down to the messenger, and your sense of them, your feelings, your intuition about them.

The Apostles and the early followers of Jesus paid for the message, that you might believe their *veracity*, with their lives. Tradition has it that all of the original Apostles faced death when given the choice between telling the truth or living as cowards and betrayers. Their holy self-giving witness for the truth is why we are here today. Would anyone give up their life for a lie? Does that make sense? Would anyone who was an eyewitness lie about their encounter with God, only to face being killed for their words and not retract them to save themselves? The message they had to share with others was more important and powerful than their own lives.

Consider the events of this last week in Washington D.C., that is, if you are even still following it. This week it boiled down to two people giving two very different accounts of the truth. Which one do you believe? Or is this even a fair question? Perhaps we will never know given the circumstances and a way

to verify the truth beyond a shadow of a doubt, other than our personal feelings and political beliefs. Neither of these individuals has put their life on the line for the truth. A one commentator aptly said, *"It seems like two huge egos battling over the truth."*

Not so with Jesus and the Apostles. No ego here. Just a humble God with humble followers. These humble followers, and this humble God try to speak the truth to power, and power is threatened. Power does not want to listen to the real truth, which is that all worldly power is temporal and illusory and is at the pleasure of God alone.

"When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." People will always have their doubts, but when someone puts their very life on the line for the truth, those doubts should shrink and diminish. God is with us always. We have access to discovering the truth, if we but look for it.

There are three main areas of focus in the modern search for God:

- We yearn for *simplicity over the complexity* which our lives have become, and discover that this complexity is of our own doing and making. We yearn to shed things that clutter our lives, so that there may be room for us and some spirituality in them,
- We yearn to experience the Holy One, and so many have taken up *mindfulness and meditation* to make space in their mental and spiritual life, and find a quietness in which they may find God and peace in their souls; in which they can learn to focus upon what is in front of them not only today, but right now.
- We yearn for *true happiness*, that elusive goal which many strive to define and which you know it when you have it.

For many decades we have learned to seek happiness in things, things outside ourselves, instead seeking it within.

As we yearn for the truth, let us remember the truth costs dearly, so we should always focus on seeking the truth that matters in life. Not something less. What do you suppose that is?

AMEN