**The Trinity, by Joyce Marble**

Good morning members, friends and visitors.

The Lord be with me as I give this message to you today.

**Colossians 1:11–19**

11May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully 12giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible , whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers--all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

**Luke 23: 33-43**

33When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.  34Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing. 35And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” 36The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, 37and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “ Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself AND us! But the other rebuked him saying, “Do you not fear God , since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said ( “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”) Ever present Christ so are We having the right foot in Paradise and leaning on the Left.

Colossians speaks about Jesus’ role as co-creator of the world, “for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created” (1:16). The thrones and dominions and rulers are angelic authorities created to rule in heaven. Some of these authorities went into rebellion against God, we learn elsewhere. Since his ascension, Jesus has complete authority over them, “with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him,”

Besides being fully human, Jesus is fully divine, as it says at the end, “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (1:19).

The gospel passage has that memorable line where Jesus prays for God to forgive his persecutors, “for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Jesus again shows his compassion when he tells the repentant thief that he will be with him in Paradise (23:43)

After they brought Jesus’ body and laid him in a tomb He rose on the third day. And all those who were witness to this had no idea that he lived on....

Jesus is with us all to this day. God and Jesus are both the creators of the universe including ourselves. God and Jesus are in us ... God and Jesus are around us ...Visible and Invisible.

 **What Does it Mean That God is a Trinity?**

The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons — the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Stated differently, God is one in essence and three in person. These definitions express three crucial truths: (1) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, (2) each Person is fully God, (3) there is only one God.

**The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons**

The Bible speaks of the Father as God (Phil. 1:2), Jesus as God (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit as God (Acts 5:3-4). Are these just three different ways of looking at God, or simply ways of referring to three different roles that God plays?

The answer must be no, because the Bible also indicates that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons. For example, since the Father sent the Son into the world (John 3:16), He cannot be the same person as the Son. Likewise, after the Son returned to the Father (John 16:10), the Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit into the world (John 14:26; Acts 2:33). Therefore, the Holy Spirit must be distinct from the Father and the Son.

In the baptism of Jesus, we see the Father speaking from heaven and the Spirit descending from heaven in the form of a dove as Jesus comes out of the water (Mark 1:10-11). In John 1:1 it is affirmed that Jesus is God and, at the same time, that He was “with God”- thereby indicating that Jesus is a distinct Person from God the Father (cf. also 1:18). And in John 16:13-15 we see that although there is a close unity between them all, the Holy Spirit is also distinct from the Father and the Son.

The fact that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Persons means, in other words, that the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Jesus is God, but He is not the Father or the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, but He is not the Son or the Father. They are different Persons, not three different ways of looking at God.

The personhood of each member of the Trinity means that each Person has a distinct center of consciousness. Thus, they relate to each other personally — the Father regards Himself as “I,” while He regards the Son and Holy Spirit as “You.” Likewise the Son regards Himself as “I,” but the Father and the Holy Spirit as “You.”

Often it is objected that “If Jesus is God, then he must have prayed to himself while he was on earth.” But the answer to this objection lies in simply applying what we have already seen. While Jesus and the Father are both God, they are different Persons. Thus, Jesus prayed to God the Father without praying to Himself. In fact, it is precisely the continuing dialogue between the Father and the Son (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 5:19; 11:41-42; 17:1ff ) which furnishes the best evidence that they are distinct Persons with distinct centers of consciousness.

Sometimes the Personhood of the Father and Son is appreciated, but the Personhood of the Holy Spirit is neglected. Sometimes the Spirit is treated more like a “force” than a Person. But the Holy Spirit is not an it, but a He (see John 14:26; 16:7-15; Acts 8:16). The fact that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force (like gravity), is also shown by the fact that He speaks (Hebrews 3:7), reasons (Acts 15:28), thinks and understands (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), wills (1 Corinthians 12:11), feels (Ephesians 4:30), and gives personal fellowship (2 Corinthians 13:14).

These are all qualities of personhood. In addition to these texts, the others we mentioned above make clear that the Personhood of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Personhood of the Son and the Father. They are three real persons, not three roles God plays.

Another serious error people have made is to think that the Father became the Son, who then became the Holy Spirit. Contrary to this, the passages we have seen imply that God always was and always will be three Persons. There was never a time when one of the Persons of the Godhead did not exist. They are all eternal.

While the three members of the Trinity are distinct, this does not mean that any is inferior to the other. Instead, they are all identical in attributes. They are equal in power, love, mercy, justice, holiness, knowledge, and all other qualities.

**Each Person is fully God**

If God is three Persons, does this mean that each Person is “one-third” of God? Does the Trinity mean that God is divided into three parts?

The Trinity does not divide God into three parts. The Bible is clear that all three Persons are each one hundred percent God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all fully God. For example, it says of Christ that “in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9).

We should not think of God as like a “pie” cut into three pieces, each piece representing a Person. This would make each Person less than fully God and thus not God at all. Rather, “the being of each Person is equal to the whole being of God.”[1] The divine essence is not something that is divided between the three persons, but is fully in all three persons without being divided into “parts.”

Thus, the Son is not one-third of the being of God, He is all of the being of God. The Father is not one-third of the being of God, He is all of the being of God. And likewise with the Holy Spirit. Thus, as Wayne Grudem writes, “When we speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together we are not speaking of any greater being than when we speak of the Father alone, the Son alone, or the Holy Spirit alone.”[2]

**There is only one God** If each Person of the Trinity is distinct and yet fully God, then should we conclude that there is more than one God? Obviously we cannot, for Scripture is clear that there is only one God: “There is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:21-22; see also 44:6-8; Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4-5; 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Kings 8:60).

Having seen that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct Persons, that they are each fully God, and that there is nonetheless only one God, we must conclude that all three Persons are the same God. In other words, there is one God who exists as three distinct Persons.

If there is one passage which most clearly brings all of this together, it is Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” First, notice that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinguished as distinct Persons. We baptize into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Second, notice that each Person must be deity because they are all placed on the same level. In fact, would Jesus have us baptize in the name of a mere creature? Surely not. Therefore each of the Persons into whose name we are to be baptized must be deity.

Third, notice that although the three divine Persons are distinct, we are baptized into their name (singular), not names (plural). The three Persons are distinct, yet only constitute one name. This can only be if they share one essence.

My experience has been when I look at times passed, I am aware that Jesus in my life, helped me to make choices, to weigh the consequences. Living with Jesus in me to choose the path I would walk in life with his guidance, molding me into the person I am today.

My Grandmother, Rosa, had Jesus in her as well .

She helped lead me in the Way. I believe she passed the Love of Jesus on to me.

God has been active in my life. Looking back, I see how He has guided me over the years. From my birth to present, I see the Lord and how he worked in me. Keeping me out of danger. When I would have manic bipolar episodes (which at that time there was a stigma about mental illness.) Later on in life my doctor pointed me in the correct direction and lots of therapy (which is extremely difficult and painful work). Do not be frightened. Mental illness is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Once the doctor finds the right medications for you and you speak out honestly about harmful and unspeakable actions laying heavy on your heart, recovery is surely on its' way. Without the help of the Lord in my life, I would truly have been lost.

(I reflect back to my Grandmother for bringing me closer to the Lord, by spending precious time with me.) Lately I have been neglecting my daily devotionals but after searching my thoughts, to write this message, it has renewed my commitment to Jesus. And whatever I can do to keep on my life's course with Jesus as my captain, I know I will reach the other shore, remembering that Jesus lives IN me if I live IN Him.

Colossians 2:6-7

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord continue to live your lives in him rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith just as you were taught, abounding in Thanksgiving.

Luke 24:50-51

Then, he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them.

While he was blessing them, He withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; And they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Giving you a “for instance”, you may call it a coincidence or a miracle .

My sisters and I planned a “sisters weekend” and went to enjoy the Highland Games in New Hampshire.

My youngest sister stopped by a gentleman with a guitar playing traditional songs, with a wonderful voice and exclaimed “I could stay and listen to his voice all day.” I agreed, and purchased a CD from Charlie Zahm “The Celtic Balladeer.” One of the songs led me to writing my message for you today. I didn't know what to speak to you about but, it all came together around this one song and that is how it has been throughout my life.

Keep in mind at all times He will live IN you if you live IN Him.

Please stand and make a “Joyful Noise unto the Lord” by singing hymn number 163 “The Lord of the Dance.” Sing out and dance, so all of God's kingdom, visible and invisible, can hear and know that, “He Lives IN us IF we Live IN Him!”

Keep looking for Christ (God) in your life. Be aware, even in life's coincidences.

Hymns - #552 “We Gather Together”, #163 “The Lord of The Dance,” #578 “Sent Forth by God's Blessing”

congregational response Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

Deacon Joyce E. Marble