



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I don't know about you, but I am one who likes to know exactly what is expected of me. That way, I at least have a shot at fulfilling an expectation. Our Gospel text from Matthew today is another reason why I love Matthew so much. Jesus gives his disciples and us, his final mandate. It is very clear to me what He expects of His disciples. I do not think there is any room for confusion. We are to, "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 teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

This week as I was pondering what to talk about from this text this morning, I struggled between two ideas: The Great Commission I just read and talking about the Holy Trinity. Because today we celebrate Holy Trinity Sunday. Three in one, one in three as we are called to baptize in the name of our Triune God. Folks, it is true that we are commissioned to go out, out the doors of this very sanctuary and baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit making disciples for God. But how equipped are we to share the good news of our Triune God and what he has done and is still doing for us in this life, with others? We are to baptize all people so that the Holy Spirit can come to them in the waters, so they too may come to know our special Triune God.

As you might remember, last week we talked about the Holy Spirit and how difficult it was to understand how He works in our world, as God. Well, you thought that concept was tough to comprehend, today we should dive headfirst into thinking about our trinitary God. We hear Father, Son and Holy Spirit so often do we really give thought to exactly who or what that means. Actually, the word trinity is not found anywhere in Scripture, yet as our Gospel today tells us we are to baptize in all three names of our One God. And being an inquisitive person, I try to understand this God who made us, redeems us, and sanctifies us.

I suspect that is why you are here today. You too have a need to know who God is, to know God in all His glory.

Our creeds and our ELCA constitution try to use words to define in more detail who God is, while confessing our faith in Him. So, hang on here we go!

Our God is one eternal deity with three eternal and essential distinctions: Father, Son, and Spirit. Three persons in one substance and one being in three distinct beings. Do note that they are coeternal and coequal. They cannot be divided, as they are united with one another and interpenetrated with one another. Each has a peculiar character when viewed in relation to the others. The Father is not begotten but is said to be ingenerate or innate. The Son is begotten eternally and the Spirit proceeds by filiation. Got it?

Believe it or not it took the church over 400 years to come up with those statements. The doctrine of the Spirit almost 1000 years. And it was all done by people who weren't even Lutheran. Over and over again in Seminary, I remember hearing, "Bring me a person that can comprehend the Trinity and I will show you a worm that can comprehend a person." Let's see if we can make this concept easier.

When I was between my second and third year at St Olaf College my dad got me a summer job at the place he worked, Allen Bradley. Sorry if you have heard this analogy before. Allen Bradley is huge factory in downtown Milwaukee close to the lakefront, that makes electronic components. Today it is known as Rockwell Industries. One thing about the huge complex is that it had this amazing four-faced clock on the original building. Have any of you ever seen it?

Guinness Book of World Records states that it is the largest four-faced clock in the world. It is 280 feet above the streets in Milwaukee. It is 2 times the size of Big Ben in London with a face that has a diameter of 40 feet 3 ½ inches across. The hour hand is 15.8 feet long and weighs 490 pounds. The minute marks are 4 feet long. Hard to imagine? They say you can see it for miles out on Lake Michigan. As big as it is, it is one clock with four faces.

So, think about that for a minute. One clock, with four faces telling the time for people to see from miles around. From the east, from the west, from the north and from the south this clock stands prominent in the Milwaukee skyline. At night it lights up and is a beacon to incoming ships in the harbor. Built in 1962 but dreamed about for a decade before that by the owner of the company Harry Bradley, it is a mystery of how it was built so high in the air, a mystery of how all four sides are run by one mechanism.

And you know where I am going with this right. It is no different than God as three persons, the Trinity. We have God the father, creator. God the Son, the redeemer. And God the Spirit, the comforter, the counselor and the one who makes us Holy. We see the three faces of God, but we have only one God. Like that clock on the Allen Bradley tower, one clock with several faces, but only one clock.

Each face tells us something. God the Father is the creator of the universe. He made everything that exists. Jesus, the son redeemed us on the cross, showing God's love for us

as forgiveness, abundant and eternal life. And the Spirit of God is with us every day to lead us through all the circumstances of our lives while showing God's love for us.

Our Sermon Hymn Today, "Come, Join the Dance of Trinity" is a delightful folk tune that does a good job of talking about the trinity and how they dance together as our amazing God. Have any of you ever seen the movie or perhaps read the book, The Shack? The book was written by William Paul Young in 2007 and then made into a movie ten years later with Octavia Spenser as Papa, Avraham Aviv Alush as Jesus, and Sumire as the Spirit.

You see in music, things, word and film, people are still exploring who our Triune God is, even today. And we all seek to know God better, I think, so we can live into this Great Commission of telling all the world about our God, of baptizing everyone in His Name, and of His walking beside us until our days on earth end and then seeing Him face to face in heaven.

The end of our text for today tells us that we are also to teach all the things that Jesus has taught us. This might seem a bit daunting. However, when we are secure in knowing who God is, who our Triune God is and what He has done for us, it will not be so hard. If we live by the example of Jesus, which is what He wants for us, we will lovingly live our lives with regard for our neighbor. When we love God, we then transfer that love to our neighbors. And what could be a better teacher, than to have others observe how we live our lives in that light.

Now don't get me wrong here, it is not easy to 24/7 be our best selves. We remember after all, that we are human and have so many challenges in life. The world often runs contrary to what God's plan is for creation, and so we hold on to that last line of our text for today. "I am with you always, to the end of the age." And I for one appreciate that promise more than you know. God walking with us always.

Our Trinity can be a mystery to some but to those who believe it not only utters, Father Son and Holy Spirit, but also, love, love, and love. And know that we are all created in the image of this three in one and one in three God. "So, God created humankind in his image God blessed them. . . . God saw everything he had made, and indeed, it was very good. AMEN