

The Trinity as the source of our Purpose, Security, and Direction .

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2024

Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0 : 00] O zest, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O
say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O
say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O
say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O
say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O
say, O say, O say, O say, O say, O say, Alleluia.

Alleluia. The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to St. John.

Glory to you, Lord Christ. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

Jesus answered him, Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time? Into his mother's womb and be born. Jesus answered, Truly, truly I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[1:41] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.

So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

Truly, truly I say to you, We speak of what we know and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

No one has ascended into heaven, except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

[3:06] The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Christ. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You can put the mic on the table. Thank you. Thank you.

Whoever desires to be saved must above all hold the Catholic faith.

Whoever desires to be saved must love the Church, the Catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefined, will without doubt perish, shall we? And the Catholic faith is this.

And you worship one God in unity, and the Trinity in unity, neither the beauty of persons, nor the right of the substance.

For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the God and the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, the glory of the people, the majesty of the eternal.

[4:29] Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit. The Father is one created, the Son is one created, the Holy Spirit is one created.

The Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. The Father eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal.

And yet, there are not three eternal, but one eternal. Just as there are not three uncreated, or three infinite, but one created, and one infinite.

In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty. And yet, there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. And yet, there are not three gods, but one God.

[5:37] So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. And yet, there are not three gods, but one Lord.

Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so as we are committed, so as we are committed, and I have committed, to save the earth, free gods, or the Lord.

The Father is not made, nor created, nor begotten by anyone. The Son is not made, nor created, nor begotten by the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit is of the Father, and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

Thus, there is one Father, not three fathers, one Son, not three sons, one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

[6:43] And in this Trinity, none is before, or after another, none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three verses are co-eternal, with each other, and co-eternal together, so that in all things that have been stated of God, the Trinity in unity, and unity in Trinity, is to be worshipped.

Therefore, the one who desires to be saved, must be the gods of our Trinity. But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation, that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is the right thing that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.

He is God, because of the substance of the Father before all ages. And he is man, born from the substance of his mother in this age.

Perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh. And human flesh. Equal to the Father with respect to his divinity, less than the Father with respect to his humanity.

[8:15] Although he is God and man, he is not two, but one Christ. One, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God.

one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Who suffered from our salvation, descended into heaven, rose again and further again from the dead. Ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I ask it to me that all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account of certain from the peace. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

This is the kind of faith. Whoever cannot be needed faithfully and firmly cannot be saved. Amen. Remaining standing, let us pray.

[9:55] Glory be to you, O Father everlasting, who did send your only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. glory be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Glory be to you, O Holy Spirit, who does enliven us together with Christ and does shed abroad his love in our hearts. Blessed be to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, and blessed be your glorious name forever.

Amen. Please be seated. It's good to see all your lovely faces this morning.

And it is wonderful to have the Sisters of St. Mary join us in worship as well. I know that this has been a very busy time of the year for all of us, both in the life of the church and even in our diocese. The Synod just concluded yesterday. And in fact, Brian and John just got back from there and the Sisters of St. Mary were also there at the Synod.

[11:22] So they actually came from the Synod to Syracuse straight from there. So we're really glad and honored that you are present with us. And as I thank you also, I want to just express my gratitude to all of you for your prayers for me in the two weeks that I was in Wittenberg, Germany.

It was a wonderful time. I learned a lot. It was at times at the end of those two weeks grueling. I've been eight hours of study a day.

But it was also a wonderful time just to be able to be in that setting and that context to learn about the faithfulness of God to his people and to learn about our Anglican heritage and the truth of the gospel.

And I hope that in the coming weeks I'll be able to share some of that with you. Today, we are celebrating, we're observing the Sunday after Pentecost, also known as Trinity Sunday.

And as we have just joined together in the confession of the true faith, which says that we worship the divine majesty of the eternal Trinity in unity as the church of the Holy Trinity as we're so called.

[12:39] This is also a parish feast day. So it's a wonderful time to reflect on the truth of the triune God. So it's a wonderful time to be reminded of what we mean when we say we worship a triune God.

I know that the confession was long. That's why we only do it once a year on Trinity Sunday. But it's a wonderful thing to be reminded of that we worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

But not only that we worship them, we have a connection to Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Rescuer, the one who came into the world to save us.

But oftentimes we have a wrong notion of the other two persons of the Trinity. The Father is distant. It seems like it's the one with the armor, right? Wrongly, we sometimes see that.

It's wrongly. The Holy Spirit is some sort of force of ethereal thing. But rather, as we see in the confession, the three persons of the unity are persons, intimate persons.

[13:51] And through Christ we have and we can and we do have a relationship with each person of the Trinity. We saw in our Gospel reading that God the Father so loved, loved who?

The world. And what did He do? Because of His great love, He sent His only Son, and God the Son comes in love to rescue us.

And God the Holy Spirit inhabits us, indwells us when we come to faith in Jesus Christ and through Him we have access to the benefits of the work of Jesus Christ for us.

So those are the things that we ought to continually, not just today on Trinity Sunday, but continually in our walk with the Lord, continually dwell on these truths of our fellowship with the Triune God.

There's a great privilege and blessing to have it because of our faith in Jesus Christ. And so, I want to invite us to think about these three questions that I'm about to state in a moment.

[15:01] I think these three questions are at the heart of every human being, every single human soul, whether they know it or not, whether explicitly or implicitly, ask these questions of themselves.

The first question is, what am I living for? The second question is, where do I belong? And the third question is, where am I going?

What am I living for? Where do I belong? Where am I going? These three existential questions are at the heart of every human soul.

It is the existential search for purpose, for security, and for direction. And each of these questions demand an answer.

And as in every operating manual, when you buy something, where do you go to look for the answers to how to operate that thing? You look at the manufacturer's manual.

[16:08] So the same thing is true of us as human beings created by a creator God. We, the answer to those questions lies with the manufacturer, the creator rather.

If your heart longs to know and find purpose, can I suggest to you this morning that the blessed place to find the answer to these questions is to go to the one who made you, who fashioned you.

And unfortunately, as human beings, we have wandering hearts and our wandering hearts have rejected God as our father. But yet, Christ came into our mess, into our sin, and into our despair to seek us out.

He came to rescue us from the implacable enemy of sin and death. He comes to bring new life into us.

He empowers us in this new life, giving us a renewed heart to respond to his love, which he freely bestows upon us, through the Holy Spirit.

[17:28] And here's the reality. Only those who have come to faith in Jesus have satisfactory and hopeful answers to these three defining questions.

Can I say it to you again? Only those who have come to faith in Jesus Christ have satisfactory and hopeful, comforting answers to these three defining questions as we've listed them.

As for those who turn to follow Jesus, we're reminded of God's word, which assures us that in Christ we are, we have an eternal purpose, we have eternal security, and we have an assurance that we are in the right direction with a sure and certain destination, which is the home that our Lord Savior, Jesus Christ, has gone to prepare for us.

So these three key defining questions in the passage, we see them in our epistle this morning of Romans chapter 8 verse 12 to 17.

It's on page 1122 of your pew Bible if you want to open and follow along. But there are three things that are made clear to us in this passage.

[18:43] the first third of it answers the question of what am I living for, the purpose for which I exist. And in answering that, it tells us of the reality of our existence.

We're in battle. And the second talks about security. Where do I belong? Security. In the second half of the verses, verse 14 to 14 and 15.

It tells us of the new family, the assurance of belonging. And the third question answers the question, where am I going? The new future. So let's look at the first two verses, verse 12 and 13. What am I living for? The purpose for which I live. Verse 12, Paul writes, So then, brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. This passage talks about the indebtedness of the Christian.

[19:59] You are indebted to the triune God. God the Father planned your salvation from before the foundation of the world.

God the Son secured your salvation by His perfect life and His atoning death. And God the Holy Spirit now lives in you, applying the finished work of Christ to you.

Because of this, you are not like the rest of the world. You have a changed allegiance. For these reasons, Christian, you are called by God to be what you have become in Christ Jesus.

It is He who has called you. You live in the reality of being who you are, someone who has been brought into the love and the light of God.

the Spirit of God that lives in you is what makes you debtors to live to the Spirit. So then, brothers and sisters, you are debtors.

[21:10] You are debtors to the Spirit. Here in these two verses also, it speaks of a fight, of a battle that is being waged.

I want to first say at the onset, as we look at this battle, there is a guarantee, I hope you see it there, of winning. It's not a battle where the end is in doubt.

There is a guarantee of winning in this battle. But it is a battle that has to be fought nevertheless, even though the guarantee, the end is assured.

There is a sense in which there is a battle in the Christian life to be waged. You know this if you have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Even in yourself, the battle rages. In reality, it is a battle in which you have long been a participant.

Even before you came to Christ, you have been a part of that battle. Because what is true about this battle is that there is no neutral ground in this fight.

[22:19] there is no one side opposing one side and one part sitting it out. You're either on one or two sides in this war that is raging.

All of us are in this battle between good and evil. Let me define what good is. Because oftentimes we define good according to our own human standards. But let me define what good is according to the Bible.

Good being God himself. That is the good side. God good God is on the side of good.

And evil being every force spiritual and physical that opposes God's sovereign rule and reign. Do you see the two sides now?

We are we were ones according to St. Paul following the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air. That is we were on the side of evil opposing God as our creator as our king and as our ruler and as our lord.

[23:28] We were aliens St. Paul tells us we were aliens to God's promises promises. But God being rich in mercy has rescued us and he has transformed us from the domain of darkness into that of his marvelous light.

We are now on the other side of this war that is raging. On the side of the good not because of anything we've merited in ourselves but because of Christ's saving work in us.

And so then we are called because we are on this side of the good to continue the battle to war against the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh St. Paul tells us you will die and we've been already raised from that dead deadness into new light.

So but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. Here is the setting in which we continue the battle. The act of putting to death the deeds of the body.

The deeds of the body are a misdirected mind a misdirected heart a misdirected soul and a misdirected will. Remember the summary of the law.

[24 : 45] You should love the Lord your God with what? With all your mind your heart and soul and will. That is what we were unable to do but because now we have been given this new nature in Christ we're able to do it.

We have the spirit of Christ the spirit of God living in us that enables us. And so the prior inability to fulfill God's command to love the Lord our God with all of all of our faculties has changed.

So if you put to death the deed of the body Paul tells us because the spirit lives in you you are able to do it you will live. But we say here then that the fight though we should see is not a physical battle.

Because again as St. Paul tells us we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Neither is the battle mere asceticism. And I say that knowing that there are people who have dedicated their lives here among us to a monastic life.

But I hope for those of you who are downstairs I hope you hear some of the things they were saying about what they've done in separating their lives. They're not separating their lives away from the world they're giving it to Christ in order to serve God and to serve the world.

[26 : 09] And I think that we think that that's for the sisters of St. Mary to do. The rest of us can live in the world. The reality is that it is a special calling and vocation to do that.

But the reality is that we are all because we're in Christ Jesus to live a life in which we set our lives apart because we are apart.

So we live apart from the world even though we are in the world. So I want to talk about that. So the fight is not just mere physical entanglement. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood. neither is it asceticism. The false asceticism that says that you are just to deprive your body of God's good creaturely gifts. And that's the way by which you merit heaven.

That is a falsehood. What it means really to put to death the deeds of the flesh, the deeds of the body, is to modify the flesh. It is the modification of the flesh.

[27 : 14] That word, as John Stott explains it, he says, it is neither masochism, which is self-inflicted pain, that's not what Paul is calling us to do, nor is it mere false asceticism, which is aiding your body and depriving your body of God's good gifts.

That's not what we're called to do. But it's a clear-eyed recognition of the reality of evil and the repudiation of that evil by putting it to death.

death. How does that work in us? It's to first recognize that that evil resides in us because of our creaturely fallen nature to love sin more than God.

And so when we find that in us, we are called to put them to death. It's an active work and it's an ongoing work in the life of a Christian.

putting to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit. And notice here that you are not unaided in that work.

[28 : 24] Who helps you? God the Holy Spirit. Because it's by Him, in His power, that you are able to accomplish the work of mortifying your flesh and living unto God.

The things we put to death will be different for all of us. We all have different things to modify in our flesh. It could be malice, lust, self-promotion, pride, self-pity.

It's a myriad of ways. But we are called whatever that thing is to put them to death. As a Christian, it's a martial way of living.

We're soldiers for Christ. We are to be spiritually disciplined in that regard. and it's not just a mystical, magical thing that you're doing either.

It is a physical, it is done in the real world, in your everyday life, in your everyday relationship, in your interactions with your brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

[29 : 31] To love God and to love one another. and to deny the self, that is the deeds of the body, that puts the self in the center.

It is done through the gospel. I want to repeat that. It is done by the Spirit through the gospel. Because the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, takes the promises of God, the Holy Spirit reminds us of the gospel, the saving act of God at the cross, it reminds us of it.

It reminds us that action of Christ's death and resurrection and his declaration that we are justified by faith, through not our own deeds, but by the work of Christ for us, by the merits of Jesus Christ. The Spirit reminds us of that as we war against the deeds of the body. And so what does it look like, brothers and sisters? As you war, you will stumble.

You will at times fail. But the Spirit comes and reminds you of the promises of God. And it reminds you, not only reminds you, but the Spirit applies the benefits of what Christ has accomplished for you.

[30 : 52] So that when you stumble and when you fall, you go back to the cross of Jesus Christ. So, again, I want to remind you that this is a battle, but the end is already being accomplished.

You are on the winning side. It's not a losing battle. It's a winning battle. And there's a second question that we have to ask. Where do I belong? The security.

Well, here's the wonderful thing. You are in this battle, a winning battle, but here are the comforts about it. You are not unaided. You have the spirit.

You belong to a family, a new family. And you are assured because you belong to this family that you belong. Look in verse 14 and 15.

For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear.

[31 : 56] Brothers and sisters, you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. For you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba, Father.

Now, for those who are of the female gender here, you're reading that and you say, well, there's a problem there. Sons. Where do I fall in that?

Well, actually, it is a wonderful gospel truth that sons here is not appertaining to gender, male or female. It is a judicial term that Paul intentionally uses.

And when he says sons, he's talking about all of us, both male and female, because in Paul's day, it's only sons inherit. And so what he's saying is that if you've come to Christ, whether woman or man, child or adult, whether Jew or Gentile, when you've come to Jesus Christ, come to God through Jesus Christ, you are sons of God.

You are co-heirs with Christ Jesus. You have the benefit of inheritance. You've been adopted into a family, the family of God.

[33 : 22] I don't know whether you take the time to think about who you are and where you belong. We all belong in different places. I'm African by birth.

I'm proud to be Nigerian. I belong there. That's the land of my ancestors. I'm American by citizenship. I'm happy to belong there.

This is the country where I was raised and I'm raising my family. I'm happy to be a New Yorker. Those are things where I can say I belong. You can identify those things, areas where you belong to.

But the primary place where you belong, brothers and sisters, is that you belong to the family of God. I wonder if you actually recognize that your first primary identity is not any of those things, although they are important and should be celebrated.

I celebrated mine, but at the root of it all, I belong to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And that reality changes and colors every other affiliation that I have.

[34 : 31] Where do you belong? I can't find security in being African, Nigerian, or American. I look at the world around us, there is no security anywhere. I don't know if you think the same.

there is nothing that gives assurance in all of those other things. Here is security. Here is a love that I cannot grasp, that I belong to God.

I am an adopted son, co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Because of his love, he has justified me. Even though I am a sinner, he has made me worthy.

He has covered me with his righteousness. righteousness. And now I can cry. Sinner though I am, I have been declared righteous and I have been sanctified.

And now I can cry. You can cry. Abba, Father. I don't know what you, that word, that it's a work of genius that Paul uses that Hebrew word, Abba, here.

[35:43] he's writing in Greek, but he wants to know to us the beauty of what it is to have God as father. So we can use familiar language to talk to our God.

God, I've been away for two weeks. My sons, the younger ones, the older ones are too cool, a little bit, but the younger ones were so happy to see me.

And they ran, Daddy. Well, that's kind of what we are now able to do. We were unworthy. Christ has made us worthy, so that we can cry Abba, Father, Daddy.

And we can relate to God as his children, assure that he loves us and we have every benefit through Christ applied by the Holy Spirit.

So we know where we belong. We have security because we're family of God. lastly, where am I going? What direction? What's my future?

[36:53] Well, Paul tells us this new future. And he tells us that this future has a certainty, a certain and sure end. Look in verse 16 and 17. The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

And if children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. That's why he uses the word sons to describe all who were in Christ in the prior verses.

We are heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the work of the Spirit in you is to bear witness with your spirit.

The Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are children of God. And so when you wall against your flesh and you are walking to put to death, mortify the flesh and the sinful nature, your inherent sinful nature and to, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be more and more like Christ, the accuser will come, as he often does, and tells you, well, you're not doing so good.

you're not so hot. He comes. Here are the comforting words. The Spirit himself will come as well.

[38:24] The Holy Spirit which indwells you and bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. How does that happen? It happens through the means that God is passionate to, the word of God, the word of life.

And as we live out that word among one another, we speak, we've been going to 1 Corinthians, we talk about what it is to prophesy, we prophesy the truth of the promises of God to one another.

That we are children of God. Not on our own merits, but by the work, finished, accomplished work of Jesus Christ, we are children of his.

We're heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ. We have a certainty of inheritance. I want to share with us, I want to just dwell on this last part.

Provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him. Well, that's the reality of the Christian life. It is a life of self-denial. That's what the suffering means here.

[39:24] It's denying the self, continuing the work of modifying the flesh. And that requires suffering with Christ. And this is what our baptism obviously is an example of.

But not only example, but a reality of that we have been buried with Christ. We've been raised to new life in him. Will you live according to who you are in Christ Jesus?

Will you live in the world loving God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, knowing that you belong to him, and living in the victory that he's won for you?

Will you look to God as the fountain of all knowledge, and source of all love? Will you recognize the answer to your deepest questions cannot be found in the world?

It can only be found in God who made you, who loves you, who redeems you, redeemed you. Will indwell you in the power of the Holy Spirit? And secondly, will you proclaim that truth to those around you?

[40:52] That there is a place where they can found purpose, a place where they can find security, and a place where they can find direction for their lives. Downstairs, as Mother Miriam was speaking, she said something, and I wrote it down.

She says this, are we going to die and waste away because all we can do is think of ourselves? It was in the context of what it means to be called into a life dedicated to Christ.

Christ. But I wrote that down because as she says to say it, logically, I expect her to finish that sentence, but are we going to die and waste away?

When we think of as human beings, are we going to die and waste away? Because what is the thing that makes us think we will die and waste away? The things being deprived of the things of this world.

But here's the upside down wisdom of God. By dying to the things that we think in this world will make us live, by dying to those things, knowing that in fact those things are perishing and living unto God, that's how we can have life.

[42 : 20] So I'm going to repeat the question she asked. Are we going to die and waste away because all we can do is think of ourselves? Are you living a life where you are at the center of your world?

All your energy is about thinking about yourself and there's many ways we can do that. In the way, the human mind is deceitful. There's many ways we can even deceive ourselves and think we're living an altruistic, self-given life, but really we're still at the center of our life.

Whereas God, our fathers, called us to live as we created, with him at the center, living for him, living for his glory.

And if you do that, and you die to the world, you will live by the Spirit unto God. And he will be with you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, every step of the way.

Because you are his, and he is yours. Amen. Amen. Page six of your bulletin.

[43 : 46] Prayers of the people, let us pray for the church and for the people. Let us pray for the church people. Let us pray for the church people. Let us pray for the church Let us pray for the church Let us pray for the church and for the Let us pray for the church and for the these lip lip LIY lip lip lip lip lip lip lip lip mirror