

Trinity Sunday

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] An old Luther professor and theologian used to warn his seminary students by saying that if you talk too long about the Trinity, you will certainly drift into heresy.

We know from the creed that God is the creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. He is above and beyond us, which is what the word transcendence means. He is the creator and sustainer of all things because he is outside the realm of time and space. God is eternal.

We, on the other hand, are mere temporal beings who owe our very existence to him. We are dependent upon God for all that we are and all that we will ever be.

In the words from the sermon of St. Paul, as he spoke to the people of Athens in Acts chapter 17, in him that is God, we live, we move, and we have our being.

[1 : 08] God is infinite, meaning there are no limits upon him, whereas we are finite creatures who have a beginning and an end.

But the absolute mystery of all mysteries is the fact that this God who created everything, the planets, the moon, the sun, the stars, has made himself known to us.

We can never know God in some exhaustive way. We will never be equals to God. That was the great sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, thinking that they could achieve a status on par with their creator.

No, God is the one who creates. He is the one who brings all of life into existence. But God is not simply an unmoved mover.

He is not a mere spectator. He is not simply a deity who is amused by our stumblings and our failures.

[2 : 17] He is not uninterested in us, nor does he find us as utter nuisances. No, we were created in his image.

We were created to have life and that life to be lived in full communion with him. But how can we, finite and fallible creatures, have a relationship with this being God who is so alien to us?

How can the finite grasp the infinite, to use the question posed by thinkers and sages throughout history? Jesus answers this question here in our gospel text of John chapter 3.

Our Lord encounters Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee. He was a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus is convinced that Jesus is a teacher of God, based upon the signs that he had witnessed from this rabbi of Nazareth.

But our Lord tells him that the only way to enter into the kingdom of God, and therefore have a relationship with God, is to be born again.

[3 : 36] The discussion then shifts to how this is possible. How can an older man, the age of Nicodemus, be born again?

He cannot enter again into his mother's womb. So our Lord says, you must be born of water and the Spirit. Nicodemus is still confused and he asks, how can this be?

And Jesus answers by saying, no one has ascended into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, that is the Son of Man who is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

What Jesus is teaching Nicodemus is that being born again and entering into the kingdom of God is something that God does for us.

[4 : 40] God does for us. We have not, we cannot ascend into heaven on our own. But heaven has come down and descended to us.

How? Because the eternal, the infinite, and the omnipotent God has come in human flesh. God has become man.

This is the crux of Christianity. This is what Christianity is all about. The omnipotent and unknown God has revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus so that we might have life in him.

And this life begins when we turn away from the enticements and the lusts of this world, and we put our trust, we put our faith, and we put our gaze upon Jesus Christ.

As we heard this morning, whoever believes in him, speaking of Jesus, will not perish but have eternal life. One day, the famous German reformer Martin Luther was talking to a man who was haunted by the possibility that he would not be accepted by God when he died.

[5 : 58] Peter, that was the name of this tormented man, feared that he was not one of God's chosen people to be saved. And Luther said to this terrified man, you must run from the hidden God to the revealed God.

Luther, who always carried a crucifix with him, pulled out his cross and he held it up to his friend's face so that Peter could see the love of God manifested in the cross of Jesus.

Friends, God is not hiding from anyone. He is not hiding from you. God is not some philosophical puzzle that we are to try to figure out and then muse upon.

He is not some distant deity who marvels as though we are some kind of lab rat in a maze. No, God so loved the world that he became man in order that we might know him and that we might have eternal life in him.

God so loved the world that he offered his own life in love. He offered his own life upon a cross so that we might live with him forever.

[7 : 21] Dear friends, we know God because God has made himself known by becoming man. We know God because we have received God through water which God the Holy Spirit used to wash us and to make us his children.

We are heirs of eternal life as we now share in the life of Jesus our Savior. And we are to approach God not as some uninterested deity who seeks to confound or confuse us.

We are to run from the hidden God of speculation or the deity of dread and find God in the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is in the cross that God demonstrates his own love for us which makes us joyful and grateful children who long to give him all glory, honor, and praise for all eternity.

So who is God? That is God. And that is how much he loves and cares for you, his children.

[8 : 37] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.