

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen

Today IS Holy Trinity Sunday.

- We recognize, and celebrate, and give glory and praise to our Triune God.
- We, of course, should do this every week. But this week we more specifically focus on our one God in three persons, and three Persons in one God.

Whenever I lead instruction classes.....

- Whether that be an Adult Instruction Class.....
- Or Junior Confirmation.....
- I always tell them that the concept of our Triune God is the most difficult to grasp and understand.
- I always tell them that after we cover the concept of the Triune God, it is always “down hill” from there.
- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.....3 persons, one God.

The mother was trying to teach her young son the concept of the Triune God.

- When she had completed her instruction in a motherly caring and loving way.....
- She asked her son, “So what do you think?”

The young boy thought for a moment and then said.....

- So, the Father is God.
- The Son is God.
- The Holy Spirit is God.
- So there are 3 gods!

The motherly gently corrected her son.....

- No, there is only one God.

So then the boy thought again for a moment and said.....

- So the Father is God.
- So the Son is God.
- So the Holy Spirit is God.
- And they are all one God.
- So then the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must be one person.

No, the mother gently corrected the son again.

- No she said, the Father is not the Son, nor the Holy Spirit.
- And the Son is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit.
- And the Holy Spirit is neither the Father or the Son.
- Three distinct persons in One God. And one God in three persons.

So the boy was beginning to think he was getting it; but further reasoned.....

- So, the Father is eternal.
- And the Son is not only separate from the Father but begotten from the Father.
- So the Son must not be eternal.

And the Holy Spirit is sent forth from the Father and the Son.....

- So He must not be eternal either.

Once again the loving mother gently, kindly smiled and corrected her son.

- No, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each eternal. Without beginning and without end.
- Three eternal persons in one eternal God. And one eternal God in three eternal persons.

Difficult concepts to understand and perhaps even tougher to explain.

- Luther said of all the analogies that have been attempted to be used with this.....
- None of them are very good; but since we have nothing else, we speak as we can.
- Luther also said that this article of faith is so high above human understanding and language that God, as a Father, will have to excuse the stammering and lisping of His children as we do the best we can!

And at the end of the day, we take what God has given us and believe it as pure and right.

- That is what matters.

The finite mind of man cannot comprehend the infinite God.

- It is difficult for many to accept this but an infinite God transcends far beyond what our mortal, finite minds can comprehend.
- He is beyond conceptual thought and eludes our intellectual grasp.
- We must be satisfied with what we are told from the Bible.

And the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly taught in both the Old and New Testaments.

- There are more than 60 specific Bible passages that in the verse itself makes clear reference to one God and 3 persons.

In fact, Scripture opens, the very first verses of the Bible, by talking about creation and the Triune God.

- The creation story, where it all begins, right away makes clear reference to the involvement of all three persons of the one God.

You need look no further than Genesis chapter one verses one and two.

- In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
- Heaven and earth had not existed from all eternity but had a beginning.
- And the heavens and the earth did not come from some by chance event but was created.
- And that beginning came from an eternal God.
- The verb create in the Old Testament is used only of divine, never of human activity.

And when did this happen?

- “In the beginning.” That is when time first began. When time was first measured.
- For as long as God alone existed, there was no time.

Okay, so there is God, as we speak in terms of God and God the Father.

- But what about the Son? Where do you get Jesus out of this?
- Look at John chapter 1 verse 1.
- “In the beginning was the Word. And the Word WAS WITH God. And the Word WAS God.”
- A clear reference to an eternal Jesus and His involvement in creation.

Okay, now we have the Father, and the Son, but what about the Holy Spirit?

- Go to the very next verse. Verse 2 of Genesis chapter 1.
- “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the SPIRIT OF GOD was hovering over the water.”
- The Holy Spirit covering and nurturing like a mother hen, like He does for us yet today.

Want another creation reference to the Triune God?

- How about the creation of man in Genesis chapter 1 verse 26?

- “Then God said, ‘Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness.’”
- Did you notice that all those pronouns are plural?

The Triune God does not do lonely.

- The three persons of the One God and the One God of the three persons work in complete and perfect unity.
- It is the Father who has all authority.
- It is Jesus who is the “action figure” so to speak. That is, He carries out the plans and actions of the Father.
- It was Jesus who was sent from the Father.
- It is Jesus who carried out the Father’s plan of redemption.
- And it is Jesus who will come again to take us to be with Him.

And it is the Holy Spirit who is sent by the Father and the Son.

- It is the Holy Spirit who brings to us the gift of salvation that Jesus won for us.
- He does this by creating, sustaining, and increasing our faith and causing us to live God pleasing lives.

These 3 persons work in complete unity as the One God.....and that is great news for us.

- Working in complete and total unity we have a God who loves and cares and provides for all our needs, both physical and spiritual.
- And we then can worship the one God, we do not get into conflict with any other. We don’t have to worry about any other gods.
- It is the Triune God and He only whom we must worship and to whom we must turn for help and salvation.
- It is the Triune God who created us, recreated us, preserves us, and will take us to be with Him for all eternity.

And we don’t need to worry about pleasing one person of the Trinity and in conflict with another.

- They always work together and in complete unity.
- It is as if they say, “Not me, but we.” And that can be carried further to us also. I’ve entitled this message today, “Not me, but we.”

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit personifies community in the One Godhead.

- And that is how God has designed and intended for it to be between us and Him.
- It is not me, but we.

You are not alone.

- When you are lonely, in despair, discouraged—you have a Triune God who is with you and picks you up and holds you and carries you.

When you are waiting for that phone call from the doctor with the results of the tests and diagnosis.....

- You don't need to worry, to panic.
- You have a Triune God who is with you and in His love and power and might will care for you and do what is best for you.

When you have that loved one, family member, or friend that is no longer with you.....

- Maybe he or she was called home.
- Maybe he or she abandoned you, left you.
- Whatever the case....you are not alone.
- You have a Triune God who is with you, will care for you, and will not leave you.

When you have a sin that keeps haunting you.

- That is just too great. Too much guilt.
- You have a Triune God that has worked in complete unison in 3 persons, securing for you forgiveness of sins and salvation.
- And our God is eternal; all other false gods are fleeting.

Why would we not put our trust and faith and follow an eternal God who has done all this for us; and will take us to be with Him for all eternity.

- Luther in his preface to the Book of Psalms talked about the 4 winds of the soul.
- Fear, hope, sorrow, and joy.
- They go in pairs and opposite directions.

Rather than fear, we have a Triune God who gives us hope.

- Rather than sorrow, we have a Triune God who gives us joy.

We cannot do it on our own.

- It is not me, but we.

That is the way it is to be for ourselves. And this then carries over into the Church.

- Make no mistake, Jesus is the head of the church and we are the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul talks about this often.
- Different parts of the body, all equally important, all working together within the church.
- Each member showing love, concern, encouragement, support to one another.
- We rejoice with those who rejoice and we mourn with those who mourn.
- We must especially be careful with all this given the restrictions and constraints as we come out of Covid. As able, the need for us to be together, in fellowship, in person in the church.
- It is not me, but we.

And then we are called as a church body to go out into the world.

- The love of Christ flows to us, and then from us into the world.
- A world that so desperately needs our Triune God.

A teacher asked a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader, “Is the world round?”

- No ma’am, he answered.
- Is it flat, she asked?
- No ma’am again was the answer.
- Well, the teacher asked, if it is not round and not flat, what is it?
- The little third grader said, The world is crooked.

Unfortunately, the young student, I think, got it right.

- As we think about not me, but we; how much have we seen our society curve in on itself?

The shootings and violence we are experiencing in the United States illustrates all this well.

- Just since Uvalde, Texas, at the time I wrote this sermon there had been 33 more mass shootings in the U.S.
- In 157 days this year there have been 246 mass shootings.
- A mass shooting is defined as anytime 4 or more people are gunned down.
- The mass shootings have involved every kind of scenario; from the work place to domestic violence.
- In Tulsa a man shot and killed after he was angry over pain from back surgery.
- One reporter said it this way. Mass shootings have become as American as apple pie.

And how do we look at this? What is our response?

- Not me, but we. We can’t fix this on our own. We must include our Triune God.

When a mass shooting takes place.

- It is proper to grieve and lament; but before that even begins, many people turn to their own agendas.
- Be that political or otherwise.
- Perhaps outside factors speed all this along, but it really comes back to sin and exclusion of God from our lives, our ways, and our solutions.

School agendas for more than a generation have now been teaching kids that they have not been created by God with a purpose but merely the blind product of random chance, matter, and time.

- Directly or indirectly they have said God is not important.
- It was pointed out to me this week by one of our members that after the shootings a common message is pray for our schools; but our schools don't want prayer in them.
- Rather than being created by God in His image, which gives all human beings inherent worth and value.....
- Man, thinking himself wise and modern and in control of all things have thrown that out.
- Man is worshipping at the altar, but it is the altar of self.

Our culture has worked to silence the prophetic witness of the church.

- Even in some cases punishing Christians who dare speak God's Word.
- When we teach children that they are merely chance chemical reactions wrapped in skin.....
- We can hardly be shocked when some of them carry that to its logical conclusion.
- If we are simply evolutionary accidents, then our actions carry no moral weight and human lives no inherent value.

Millions claim the innocent right to end a life in the womb in the name of choice and defend this supposed right as the most important of all.

- Right here in Granite City we have an abortion clinic that is killing 25 to 35 babies a day.
- And they are celebrating that in Illinois, minors no longer need parental consent to have an abortion.
- Yet we are surprised when someone walks into a public place and treats precious humans created in God's image as if they were disposable.

There is a sickness in the soul of America.

- It is a universal plague and it is called sin.
- Yet we are daily removing its restraints.

And our enemy satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, works to take the light of Christ away and obscure God's image.

- Jesus told us the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy but I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Of course we should look for sensible solutions for dealing with the contributing factors for these tragedies.....

- But we can not cure America's illness of the soul through legislation.
- The answer is a Triune God who conferred infinite value on us all and gives us meaning, purpose, and gives us life.

It is only an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that can heal us.

- Let us proclaim a Triune God and an outpouring of that Spirit upon our nation.
- It is not me, but we. It cannot be done without God.

I opened this message with a mother teaching her son about the Triune God.

- Let us do everything in our influence to make sure our children, our grandchildren, and all those around us know the truth about God and His purpose for them.

The church is the hope of the world.

- Real healing can only happen from the Triune God working through His people.
- Government and policies will not save us.
- God alone is our refuge and strength, our help in every trouble.
- A Triune God who has created us, who has won forgiveness of sins and salvation for us, and a Triune God who is bigger than whatever problems faced and will lead us to our eternal home with Him.
- At every level, Not me; but we.
- Amen.

(Please remain seated) And now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Today on this Holy Trinity Sunday, we will use the Athanasian Creed as found on page 319 of your hymnal. Because of its length you may remain seated. Page 319 in your hymnal. We now prepare our hearts and minds to confess together the words of the Athanasian Creed.