

¹²"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

LET US PRAY: **Speak, O God, and I will hear thee;
Let thy will be done indeed.
May I undisturbed draw near thee
While thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows;
Here is balm for all our woes. AMEN (CW # 255)**

Dear worshippers of the Triune God,

In the Kuether home, there is a board game that was once played more frequently. It is called **Twenty Questions**. The goal of each player is to guess the name of a person, place or thing by hearing as few clues as possible. The one category for guessing is entitled: "Who Am I?" The real challenge in guessing that right person is enhanced because there are a number of similar qualities or characteristics that can be shared by more than just one person. For example if the clue says, "This person was a President", then that would only narrow it down to 43 possible men.

Our Triune God is above such shared characteristics. His distinguishing qualities are truly unique. Think about what could be said about God that could never be said of anyone else?

- He has no hometown. He is from eternity unto eternity.
- He has no limited sphere of control or rule. For he is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
- He does not reside in one location. He fills all things in all ways.
- He did not originate from one nation or from one nationality. Rather he is the originator and creator of all peoples and all languages.

Whenever we meet a new person (be it a neighbor, co-worker, or visitor at church) we may provide a brief introduction for ourselves. We will say, "Hello, this is my name. This is my family. This is where I work. These are my hobbies." Today is Trinity Sunday, a very special day in the Christian church year. This is the day that we once again are introduced to the one true God. From our text today we have this theme: The truth of the Trinity is made known.

1. The Trinity is a divine mystery
2. The Trinity is a divine message

1.

Here in our text, Jesus is speaking to the eleven disciples in the upper room where Jesus also instituted the blessed sacrament of Holy Communion. This was Maundy Thursday, sometime before Jesus ventured out to Gethsemane to face his betrayal. Such details of his betrayal by Judas, his capture and arrest by the Chief Priests and Elders, and also his brutal death by flogging and crucifixion have already been told to his disciples. Now they would be given greater news and fresh information which beforehand was even more of a mystery. Jesus would clarify the fact that when we worship the one true God we are worshipping the Triune God.

We may ask ourselves, “How much concerning the Trinity did these disciples already know?” From the Old Testament, it was made clear that God consists of a plurality of persons. In Genesis 1:26, As God created Adam he said, “Let **us** make man in our image, in **our** likeness.” This reference along with others in the Book of Genesis reveals how God is more than one person. Again, in the calling of Isaiah the prophet, we are told that God called out within the temple, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for **us**?” The first person plural pronoun, “us” tells us that the Old Testament believer knew that there was more than one person within the Godhead. References are also made to the Angel of the Lord. He was clearly the pre-incarnate Jesus. At the burning bush Moses was told that the same one speaking to him was both the Angel of the Lord and the God of Abraham.

Most clearly, all three persons of the Trinity are referred to in Genesis Chapter One, the very first chapter of the Bible. First we know that God the Father created all things. Secondly we know that the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And thirdly, we know that the spoken Word was the pre-incarnate Jesus. For in John Chapter One we are told, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (Jn 1:1-3).

From our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, John P. Meyer wrote some years ago about an observation and fact that Old Testament believers did know about the Trinity. He writes:

While we readily grant that the Old Testament references are “more obscure,” relatively dim by comparison with the brightness of the New Testament passages, yet we cannot concede that the Jews did not know or believe in a triune God. To mention only a few instances recorded in the New testament, we find that when Jesus called God his Father, the Jews did not protest that God has no Son, but they charged him with blasphemy because he claimed to be that Son and thus to be equal with God. The Jews in Jerusalem raised no objections when Peter on Pentecost referred to the Holy Spirit nor did the Jews in Rome when Paul traced a word of Isaiah to the Holy Spirit. They were familiar with, and accepted, the three persons, while, on the other had, they held fast to the unity of Essence: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” -Deuteronomy 6:4

Therefore these eleven disciples knew about the Trinity. But soon they would know more and appreciate it more. God the Holy Spirit would give them that fuller knowledge on the day of Pentecost. For Jesus said, “All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why the Spirit will take what is mine and make it known to you”(John 16:15). That same Holy Spirit still makes the mysteries of God known to us. Many of us have seen books with many special features. Perhaps a book may include colorful illustrations, drawings or pictures. Other books may include a protective cover. And there are also books that make audiotapes available for hearing and listening. But the Bible is **the only book** that comes with the Holy Spirit. As true God He still creates faith, strengthens faith and motivates us to share our faith in Jesus.

2.

This truth of the Trinity remains a profound mystery in many ways. As we recently confessed in the Athanasian Creed, there is much that we still can not fully grasp or understand. But as we will see there is a real purpose in God speaking over our heads from time to time. So now we will explore that purpose by also seeing that there is a clear message that accompanies this teaching of the Trinity.

In our text, Jesus spoke very clearly of three distinct and separate persons within the Godhead. As a result we benefit from and enjoy a three-fold blessing. Our redemption and salvation is made complete.

- First, the disciples witnessed Jesus as God's Son. He was the one speaking to them.
- Secondly, the disciples heard how Jesus claimed full unity with God the Father. In fact, the Father did not have anything or possess anything that Jesus did not already have.
- Thirdly, Jesus made it emphatically clear that God the Holy Spirit does not hold an inferior position within the Godhead. He too would do great things that only God can do. And that was fully demonstrated on the Day of Pentecost.

With the message of the Trinity comes a constant reminder to us that we cannot and should not try to get through this life or to the next life without him. Ultimately, we are grateful that we have a Savior God who is so infinitely superior to us, so that we have no doubt about his ability to save us for time and for eternity. God's complex makeup and existence humbles us to realize we are not God.

- This teaching of the Trinity tells us that we, on our own, could never figure out who God is. (Bear in mind that there is such a thing as a natural knowledge of God. This is natural man's ability to realize there must be a god who brought all things into existence. There must also be a god who causes my conscience to bother me whenever I sin. But the natural knowledge of God never reveals to people who the one true God is and what he has done for us.) Only the Bible and its teaching of the Trinity can introduce me to this True God.
- In the face of the Almighty Three-in-one, we know that we could never figure him out. In other words, our brains are too small and our capacity for intelligence is too limited to fully realize God's power and influence in our lives.
- Without the teaching of the Trinity as the one true God, we would not know whose demands we must meet. We would not know what expectations are made of each one of us. On our own effort and by our own doing, we could very well have considered certain sins as OK. (In other words, we would be prone to justify our sins of thought, word and action because everyone else is doing it, or because society has numbed and callused over our conscience.)
- Without the Holy Trinity facing us through his Sacred Word, we might even consider ourselves capable of earning our way to heaven.

But the truth of the Trinity, along with its mystery, shatters all pride and any thought that we might mistakenly have, in thinking that God owes us a piece of heaven. Our holy God removes any thought within us that might cause us to think think we have a special claim or stake in heaven because of our goodness.

Having been put in our place, we are lead to see our desperate need for the Triune God. We need his three-fold blessing. In short he has blessed us with: **CREATION**, **SALVATION**, and **SANCTIFICATION**. While each person of the Trinity has a clear and pronounced role within each one of the listed blessings, we know that each has a primary function as well.

1. For instance, we consider God the Father as the Maker of heaven and earth.
2. We consider Jesus, God's Son, as the ultimate payment for sin, thus giving us full and free salvation once and for all.
3. Finally, God the Holy Spirit enriches us with the bond and glue that clings us to Jesus in faith.

With this awesome message of God's unfailing love, his unlimited forgiveness and his abiding presence, we have much to be thankful for. In some families, the "big brother" is an endearing term that means someone is looking out for you. A big brother may give direction and advice, or he may literally defend a younger sibling. Even our ruling government has been called our "big brother". But our Triune God is that and so much more. He has been there for us. He will be there for us. He has earned our trust and our love. So many people today criticize Christians for clinging to a faith that is seemingly irrelevant or meaningless. But the truth is, there is nothing more practical and relevant that being saved from death. That is what Jesus has secured for us.

- The Christian faith does not rid the world of terrorists, but Jesus has assured us that he already gained the victory over the worst of all terrorists, namely Satan.
- The Christian faith does not get you a new mansion or house that is maintenance free, but Jesus has guaranteed for us a room in our Father's mansion in heaven.
- The Christian faith also makes no guarantee of cash or wealth falling into your lap. But Jesus has made us debt-free in God's sight by canceling our debt of sin with his life and death payment for sin.

What a powerful message! And what an awesome privilege to share it! Recently, I saw news reports of sever weather and tornados in the Great Plains and Midwest that caused serious damage and deaths. In one photo, a tree fell upon a car, killing the passengers. In an altogether freak accident, a steel girder fell from a bridge overpass onto a vehicle, killing its driver. I do not believe that such risks of tragedy are going to keep any of you from getting into your cars and driving back home, or to work tomorrow. There are also risks that we take when we share our faith. A friend may reject us, thus revealing the shallowness of such a friendship. Ridicule and forms of persecution may come our way. But, as real as these risks are, they will not keep us from doing the Lord's work. The work of sharing this saving message of the Trinity is rewarding. It is worth any risk. Thank God that the truth of the Trinity is made known! The Trinity is a divine mystery. The Trinity is a divine message, a message to study, a message to savor, a message to share.

AMEN.

Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen.