

Sunday, May 22, 2005

(TRINITY SUNDAY)

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father through his only Son, our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

God's Word for our focus and attention today is the Gospel Reading for Trinity Sunday.

**Matthew 28:16-20**

<sup>16</sup>Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

<b>Let us pray:</b> <b>(CW #559)</b>	<b>Be with us, God the Father;</b> <b>Be with us, God the Son</b> <b>And God the Holy Spirit,</b> <b>Most blessed Three in One.</b> <b>Make us your faithful servants</b> <b>You rightly to adore,</b> <b>And fill us with your blessing</b> <b>Both Now and ever more. AMEN</b>
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Dearly gifted and blessed people of God,

What does it take for you to realized how blessed you are?

Perhaps it might be any one of these occurrences:

- The God-given reminder of how much you have been given, as God chooses to take some of it back.
- Perhaps it is at the birth of a child, or grandchild?
- I have also known many people who came to realize their good fortune at the expense of someone else's misfortune. Thus realizing how good they got it.

A few weeks ago, the ABC television network featured a five segment remaking of the Little House on The Prairie. It was on the air for a series of five Saturdays. It depicted those primitive pioneer days, when the Ingles family ventured into the western frontier, now the great plains and Midwest of our country. Imagine journeying hundreds of miles with all that you and your family owns, packed into a modest horse drawn bunk board trailer. Then think about what it must have been like to make such a long journey from Wisconsin to Kansas with that same trailer over the rough and rutted ground of that day.

A person may well come to agree, we are blessed. Look at the many and awesome creature comforts that fill our closets, our basements, and garages. In comparison to the traveling Ingles family we have the luxuries of life. Yet, as God's people we have even more. This we can even say, is what we also have in common with that Ingles family, being that they were a Christian Family. We are blessed eternally with the sure prospect of heaven, peace and unending happiness. Jesus' love and mercy has secured this reality for us. Today, God's word cements this truth home for us in the teaching of who God is and what he has done and continues to do for us.

The blessings of the Trinity are truly apparent

1. They are threefold
2. They are for us to share

1.

Our text holds out this wonderful fact and truth. We worship One God with Three Persons. We are further given his full name, when we are told to baptize in that single name, “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Who can grasp all that God truly is? Consider for a moment what we already know from scripture. Concerning the one triune God, one pastor sums it up this way. “God is before the earth was formed even from everlasting to everlasting, who can understand that? God fills heaven and earth; His hearing, His seeing, His presence reaches around the earth and into every nook and corner of the universe continuously and simultaneously; He knows all things, what has been, what is, what will be, and what might have been; He knows all things, He sees all things, He hears all things; He neither slumbers nor sleeps; nothing escapes His attention, and nothing His knowledge. Can anyone grasp or explain how this can be?” (Peter Krey, Christian News, Vol. 43. No. 20, p. 1). Interestingly, every human conception, idea, man-made creation has a beginning and eventually an end. But our God is above and beyond all that!

Again, bear in mind that we have done nothing to warrant such a privilege to have the one true God come to us, speak to us, be called his children and to be eternally blessed thereafter. In fact, we only earn the right to be his adversaries, his enemies.

We first recall the blessings bestowed upon us by God the Father. Saint Paul sums this up for us well in his words preached in Athens, directed to the high intellectuals of his day. He told them and reminds us. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one Man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’” (Acts 17:24-28) Such an assurance of our heavenly Father’s love, care and divine providence is a tremendous comfort. For we are not just in good hands, we are in the best of hands.

God the Son further expands these rich blessings, truly poured into our laps in overflowing abundance. Listen to Saint Paul’s words to the Philippian congregation, as he highlights the miracle of Jesus’ incarnation and the beauty of his purpose. “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:5-8) Jesus’ full reason for leaving the glories of heaven was to allow himself to meet our every spiritual need. He came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

God the Holy Spirit blesses us daily, and often behind the scenes. His work is done when we hear the word of God and obey it. While his presence and power at times seem invisible, they are in no way diminished. Consider the lofty words of King David in Psalm 139. “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens you are there; if I make my bed in the depth, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalm 139: 7-10). God the Holy Spirit shares the same attributes and qualities as God the Father and God the Son. Each is all-knowing, all-powerful, and present everywhere at once. This our God demonstrates for our eternal good.

Such blessings and gifts to us from the Trinity will not wear out like old tennis shoes. These blessings will not outlive their usefulness like an old eight track tape player. They cannot be stolen out from under our noses like the work of a pickpocket. God's gifts to us are rich and lasting. And best of all they do not depend upon our effort and work. If any of his gifts required our own worthiness, we would have reason for doubt and uncertainty. God's mercy grants these gifts to us securely. Yes, the blessings of the Trinity are apparent.

- God the Father has given us more than mere physical life; he has blessed us with the gift of his one and only Son. "For God so loved the World that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
- God the Son has secured our redemption. Satan no more can lay claim to us as his own. Jesus paid the price, with the buying power of his body and blood. Saint Paul sums this truth up well in the 7 chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. "For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men" (1 Corinthians 7:22, 23).
- God the Holy Spirit grants us the knowledge and confidence of saving faith. The Bible further emphasizes this teaching by telling us, "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3)

By baptism and by teaching we have been granted these blessings. Yet, these are not blessings for us to hoard or to keep to ourselves. These truths and these blessings are ours to share. Jesus once reminded us that "to the person that much is given, much more will be expected." God's gifts to us come with the responsibility to use them wisely, faithfully and to his glory and purpose.

## 2.

Imagine a child enjoying the simple game of skipping a stone on water. Or think about his satisfaction in just watching how the stones make a splash in the water. Consider the ripple on the broken surface of otherwise calm waters, when a single stone strikes the water. The ripples continue and spread ever further from its source.

On that mountain in Galilee, referred to in our text, Jesus dropped profound news and instructions in the midst of this earth. Jesus dropped his promise and command to make disciples of all nations, using his full authority. And that ripple of the Gospel has reached us and moved beyond us.

Yes those disciples saw the resurrected Lord. They were personally trained by him, both before and after Jesus resurrection. Yet we are not ill equipped to carry out that same task. In fact we are equally equipped to make that same impact in the lives of others. By baptism and the word, new generations of people come to faith so that they too will one day affect the lives of people not yet born. I have heard the story too often of new converts within our African mission field. They have rejoiced and celebrated their new birth into God's family. But at the same time they also have been known to ask our missionaries with sadness in their faces, "Why could you not have come sooner to share this way of salvation through Christ alone. For you see our parents have already died. Now it is too late, and they are lost."

"Hesitation kills," someone once said. It simply means that quick and decisive action can make the difference between life and death (depending upon the situation and circumstances). Be

acutely aware of your opportunity to serve Christ by sharing Christ with others. These are Jesus' marching orders for his Church, "GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES".

A Christian once said, "Worship is not something you attend, worship is something you do!" Our Savior and Lord had no intention that our mission work as a church should be a spectator sport. He has made us into the players, who get to be on the field of play. He recruited us at baptism.

Perhaps you've heard this story before. A former football coach of Oklahoma University, Bud Wilkinson, was once asked, "What contribution does professional sports make to the physical fitness of American?" (You see Bud Wilkinson had become part of the President's Physical Fitness Program.) Regarding the contribution of professional sports to physical fitness, Bud abruptly answered, "Very little contribution. A professional football game is a happening where 50,000 spectators desperately needing exercise, sit in the stands watching 22 players on the field desperately needing rest".

God has made you a player in his game. And his game has much more at stake than just a mere win or loss. It involves souls hanging on the balance between heaven and hell. Praise him for revealing to you the one true God. Praise him for telling you who he is and what he has done for us. And praise him by sharing him with someone today. He's chosen you. He's called you. He's equipped you. And he's letting you do the work of his angels.

Amen.