

Sermon Trinity Sunday
June 15, 2025
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

To preach on Trinity Sunday is an honor, after all, we are speaking of our three favorite entities. The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In most churches, the sermon responsibility on this day goes to the seminarian, the deacon, the curate, or the associate priest. This assignment is of course made by the senior priest or rector.

The reason for this is of course because To speak of the Trinity and extract a theological explanation is difficult. The trinity of God, or the description of God as being the unified essence of three substances is woven throughout the scriptures. But it is spoken of in different places and is variously described using different languages. The theology of the Trinity is mystically complex but also beautifully accessible. I believe that the Trinity of God is best experienced through letting go of oneself and feeling with the heart rather than intellectualized with the mind. That said, however, an understanding of God as a trinity has been the goal of myriad councils and debates by ambitious scholars for thousands of years.

For us in the Episcopal church, the Trinity of God is a central and foundational belief. It is how we understand God's nature and relationship to humanity.

We believe that God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each a distinct person with their unique roles and relationships.

And yet at the same time we hold that there is only one God, not three separate gods.

While we say that God is three persons, we state as persons that they share the same divine nature or substance.

Trinitarian theology espouses that the Father, Son, and HS are all equal and all eternal. One entity does not arise from the other.

This has been a bit of a sticking point historically. And you can see why perhaps, with Jesus referring to God as Father and being his incarnate Son. I can fall into that way of thinking.

But as the theology has evolved, we have taken the belief that All three persons or divine entities have always existed. Begotten, not made, one in being with the Father.

I enjoy the traditional writings on the Trinity. I am grateful for them. Without the brilliance and writing of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Thomas Aquinas, and others we would not have the scholarly understanding of this foundational pillar of our faith as Episcopalians.

But this, of course, is not how Jesus spoke of the Trinity, at least not always.

Today's passage from John's gospel is lovely and mystical and, quite honestly a bit esoteric. And if we didn't have the entire rest of this gospel and the three others it might leave us feeling a bit confused about all this Trinitarian theology.

What Jesus appears to be conveying is that The Father, the Son, and the holy spirit do not exist on their own. They are interwoven with one another.

Thankfully Jesus does not leave his disciples, his followers, or us with this rather esoteric and mystical explanation of the Trinity. Rather Jesus lives the Trinity. Rather than give us an understanding of the Trinity in esoteric language, Jesus shows us how to interpret the Trinity through his life and the parables that he tells.

I give you 3 brief examples of how Jesus describes the Trinitarian relationship of God, himself, and the Holy Spirit. Through parables.

The first is:

The Parable of the Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32, is a story about a father who welcomes back his wayward son after the son has left home, wasted his inheritance, and found himself shattered by life's experiences. This is also the story of the brother who remained faithful to his father and cultural expectations.

In this parable, Jesus portrays God as the Father to both sons. To the wayward son Jesus shows us how God is forgiving and welcoming, even when we have wandered away from the person that God hopes us to be. And even when we have wandered away from our relationship with God. God is also the father of the Son who stayed behind and demonstrated a faithful and steadfast love. God's love for both sons never wavers. This is the Trinitarian God in relationship.

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

In this parable. A man is robbed, beaten, and left half-dead on the road. A priest and a Levite pass him by, but a Samaritan, traditionally considered an enemy of the Jews, stops, helps, and takes care of the wounded man.

If we look at the man in the ditch, he has been beaten and left half dead which was pretty much the state of Israel in Jesus' time. If we look at the Samaritan, he is from afar and not looked upon with honor. The Samaritan comes close to the suffering man in the ditch and brings tenderness, touch, and healing. He takes the man with him but leaves him while promising to return. This is very much reminiscent of Jesus. This is who Jesus is. This is the Trinitarian Jesus in relationship.

The parable of the Talents Matt 25:14-30

This parable might be a story to see how the Holy Spirit inspires and instructs us on how to use our gifts and abilities for God's purposes. A master entrusts his servants with varying amounts of "talents" (money) before leaving on a journey, and their success is judged upon his return based on how they used those resources.

The parable paraphrasing was informed to some degree by https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-OOWK2_n5o&t=3112s "A Future that's Bigger than the Past: Catalysing Kingdom Communities"

Jesus calls us to make the most of the gifts that God has given us. And how we choose to use our talents is done with the Holy Spirit flowing through us. Jesus says the Spirit will guide us to Truth. It is the Trinitarian Holy Spirit that assists us with staying in a relationship with God.

This is Trinitarian theology, spoken through the parables of Jesus. God, as love and ever present; Jesus as our salvation, the HS as Truth. It is the unity of these divine persons that gives life to all things.

God as part of the Trinity gave us Jesus to show us the Way to live into the light and love of the Trinity. Jesus, a part of the Trinity, loved us and gave us both spiritual and practical guidance. The Holy Spirit now and always, is the Grace that is bestowed on us in each moment of our lives.

If the first and most important thing we learn about God is that God is love, perhaps the second is that God is about being in a Relationship. Nothing in this God-created world lives outside of the relationship. Everything that God has created exists relative to something else. The Trinitarian nature of the Divine models this.

In this week to come, I invite you to sit with the Trinitarian God. Let the mystery of this divine gift flow through you. Be receptive to the 'unknowingness' of it. Let yourself Be open to the transformation that the loving Trinitarian relationship offers to us all.

Amen