

Sermon John 3 1 17 The Holy Trinity

Sermon: The Holy Trinity

Text: John 3:1-17

Theme: The Holy Trinity works together for the salvation of humankind.

Goal: To highlight the work-together of the Holy Trinity on our behalf.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: An article in the “Old Africa” magazine tells us about two missionaries who reached the Samburu tribe in North of Kenya in 1907. One of them wrote: “When (my colleague) preached to a group of Samburu men, they marveled at our knowledge of God and asked if we would remain with them and be their gods. It was difficult to persuade them that God only should be worshiped... They asked many questions: We often pray to God. From now on, what name should we use to address God? If the white man prays for rain, will God send rain? Does God hate war and raiding? Has God given us a bad country, full of thorns and famine, because we steal and kill men? We are circumcised and we offer sacrifices to God. Is he pleased with this? Will God protect us from our enemies if we do the things that please him? Does God love all men, or does he only love white men?” (Old Africa #2, pp. 4-5).

Without God’s revelation in the Bible, nobody can have the true image of God. The natural religion will always try to please God by doing some good deeds and some sacrifices. Some of the questions asked by the Samburus are the same that Nicodemus had in his heart: “I am circumcised and offer sacrifices to God; I’m a Jew and a teacher of the Law. Am I a member of God’s kingdom?” And Jesus answered: NO! You cannot be a member of

God's kingdom by yourself. You need to be born again of water and the Spirit!

And then Jesus presented to Nicodemus and to all of us the God of love, that reveals Himself to humankind as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that interacts for the salvation of all: for the salvation of Samburus and white people, for the salvation of Jews and Greeks, - because "God so loved the **world**", without exception of anyone.

As we are celebrating The Holy Trinity Sunday, let us see how God Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together for our salvation, for the salvation of all humankind.

I – God Father: Loved+sent+gave

The issue, raised by Jesus, about the Kingdom of God and how to enter it left Nicodemus with lots of questions. He was making his own efforts to please God, and his condition as a Jew and a leader of his people was something special to guarantee him the position of member of God's Kingdom. But Jesus told him that this was not enough. Human efforts cannot convince God to open the door of His kingdom. The door cannot be opened from outside by men; they are strangers and don't have the key. The door must be opened from inside, by the owner Himself, by the King.

Jesus introduces to Nicodemus a different image of God that he usually had. Jesus shows him a God of love that comes to humankind full of love to help them. A God of love that sent His one and only Son to live among humankind; and that gave His one and only Son as a true sacrifice for their sins. No animal's sacrifice was good enough to please God, - as the Samburus asked the missionaries – or as many other people think about it. No circumcision or other personal rites please God to convince Him to open the door of His Holy Kingdom. He opens the door of His

Kingdom from inside out of love to all who accept the sacrifice His Holy Son did and believe in Him as their Savior. – “God so loved the world...”

By faith, we can now call God Father as: Our Father who art in heaven. We are His beloved children. We can talk with Him by praying. We can enter His Kingdom because the door is open. This is our God, the Father, who wants to see us in His Kingdom.

II – God Son: Came from heaven+ was lifted + to save

The Son of God was made one of us. God is not a God of far, but He came to us. “*No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – The Son of Man*” said Jesus talking about Himself.

As He was made one of us, He took all our sins and iniquities upon Himself. “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” says Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21. On behalf of all humankind, He was lifted up on the cross so that we would not be lifted up because of our sins. He was the one and perfect sacrifice required to please God and in Him is the solution to the Samburu’s questions – and to our questions too.

Through Christ, God is not an angry God any more, but a God of love. “*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.*” Christ himself is “The Door” to the Kingdom of God. He takes us by our hand and leads us through the way to His Father’s home.

God the Father and the Son worked together for the salvation of humankind – for our salvation.

### III – God the Holy Spirit: calls us+ cause the new birth

How do we know this? How do we know about God and His love through His Son Jesus Christ? We know it because the Holy Spirit reveals God's gracious plan in the Bible. He inspired the Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles to write down God's deeds on behalf of humankind; and through those writings He calls us to God's Kingdom. Furthermore:

He doesn't just call, but He causes the new birth, as Jesus said to Nicodemus: *"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."* This is the Holy Baptism! The Holy Spirit brings to each person through the Means of Grace (Word and Sacraments) the benefits Jesus conquered on the cross and through His resurrection. He is God Himself working to assure us our citizenship in God's Kingdom. *"To be born anew of water and the Spirit is to live in the Kingdom of God's love."*

Conclusion: The Christian Church worships the One and Only God who reveals Himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a mystery that we cannot understand, but we believe it. In that God we trust for the forgiveness of our sins; to that God we pray in our distresses and offer Him our thanksgiving; to that God we obey, following His Commandments and His will; in that God we hope for our present and for our future. About that God we testify to the world, calling people from the darkness and from false gods to the true Light and to True God; and we share the love of the Triune God as we love our neighbors as ourselves.

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(Reading Service)