

Sermon Acts 2 22 36 Holy Trinity Sunday Series A

Sermon: Holy Trinity Sunday

Text: Acts 2:22-36 (v. 33)

Theme: The Holy Trinity in our lives

Goal: To believe (not to explain) the Holy Trinity and to rely on God's gracious work on our behalf.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: The Holy Trinity cannot be explained by the human reason. It still remains a mystery. There is only One God in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Unity in Trinity; the Trinity in Unity. The Athanasian Creed which we confessed today tries to explain it; but it is impossible. The Creed does only statements against some heresies common at the time it was formulated which denied the divinity of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit.

Maybe we can draw a parallel with an airplane: I cannot understand how an airplane can fly – such a heavy machine, with tons of load and hundreds of passengers! Always when I enter a plane and observe people entering and entering without an end... I stop thinking about this. I just relax and trust that the plane will take me where I'm going to.

As I cannot understand the Holy Trinity, I just rely on God's revelation, on His promises and on His work on my behalf as the Triune God, relaxing and enjoying the stream of my life guided by this marvellous God; and I am sure that He will take me to the goal of my life: my room prepared for me by Jesus.

I – God reveals Himself as a Triune God

We know about the Triune God from the Bible. There is no other fount or source from where we can realize that God is Three in One and One in Three. The Christian faith is the only one which has this

belief. Even if we have other monotheistic religions, like Judaism and Islamism (and some others in the past), they don't accept Jesus neither the Holy Spirit as God in the Unity with the Father. Their concept of God is different.

Many search for a god in the nature. This is the ground of all natural religions, and it is fashionable nowadays: just to go to the nature, to hug a tree, to look to the stars, and enjoy "god". This kind of religion can give some temporary relief, like when we go to a spa or on holidays. But these kinds of "gods" don't know anything about forgiveness and intimacy as we have with our Triune God.

I recently heard an interview with an actress. She was asked about her religion and her relationship with god. She answered: I relieve myself from the angry god preached by the churches. My god doesn't have the absolute truth. He is very flexible, according to my needs and wishes...

Absolute truth... people from the so called "postmodern era" don't like absolute truths anymore. Everything is relative, depending on how you accept or see it. This causes a strong individualism and splits families and community lives. - Some truths are absolute, like 2 plus 2 will always be 4; red is red and green is green at the robot. Try to accept it differently and you will see the chaos in the traffic and in the society. Some things are so and cannot be changed.

So it is God's revelation in the Holy Bible. Or you accept it by faith and enjoy the life that is offered by this eternal truth; or you reject it and suffer the consequences of your stubbornness and rebellion. The God who reveals Himself in the Bible is a God of love and forgiveness that come close to us in His Son Jesus and in the Holy Spirit. He dwells with us: Immanuel: God with us. *God has revealed the Trinity and through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we have the ability to*

*confess it, even if we don't always understand it* (Phil Brandt <PBrandt@cu-portland.edu>).

## II – The Holy Trinity works together for our salvation as a Triune God

Our text says that **Jesus** received the **Holy Spirit** from the **Father** and poured it out on the holy apostles.

Usually we are too systematic and organized in our thoughts; the same in Theology. We are used to identify the Creation with the Father; the Salvation with the Son; and the Sanctification with the Holy Spirit, as we confess in the Apostle's Creed. But we cannot put each Person of the Holy trinity in separated boxes. They are One in whatever they work on our behalf and for our good in time and in eternity.

The account of the Creation, as we heard today in the Old Testament reading from Genesis chapter 1, shows that the **Father** created everything by power of His **Word** (Hebrews 11:3). John identifies this Word of God with Jesus, the incarnate God (John 1:1ff; Hebrews 1:2). “And the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

Only Jesus died on the cross. The Father and the Holy Spirit didn't die. But they were active part of the atonement sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus didn't come by Himself. He was sent by the Father to accomplish the Father's redemption plan. The Holy Spirit came in a very special way upon Jesus when He was baptized and remained with Him during His entire ministry.

The Holy Spirit didn't come by Himself on Pentecost Day. He was given by the Father to the Son, who poured it out upon the disciples. When we are baptized “*in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*”, we are integrated into the Holy Trinity by this Holy Name.

## III – God preserves us for this and for the eternal life as a Triune God

God finished everything He created on the seventh day, but He didn't abandon His creature. The Holy Trinity still preserves us with care and food and whatever more we need for this life. As new creatures by faith in Jesus, we have to go back to Genesis chapter 1 and realize that everything God created is "very good". The creation is contaminated by sin, of course. But we have to learn to enjoy the good things of life and to give thanks to God for this. The body and the material things are not bad, as some preach and even isolate themselves in monasteries. We are God's managers of His creation! *We look at the same world as everyone else, but now we see the goodness of God reflected to us. The bread we eat, the families who love us, the money we earn, the whole thing is a gift from God now* (Phil Brandt <PBrandt@cu-portland.edu>).

Jesus cried loud from the cross: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Reconciliation was done. But it has to be shared with as many people as possible. Disciples make new disciples, as we heard in the Gospel (Mathews 28).

And God sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day to enable the disciples to go from Jerusalem to the entire world. The Holy Spirit, with the blessing of the Father, is still active, as we preached last Sunday, sharing the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus with all.

Conclusion: The Holy Trinity is an article of faith, and cannot be proved. Either you believe it or you don't believe it. There is no human argument to convince someone about this. We can only witness about it and share the benefits we enjoy in our lives having the Triune God with us all the time as our Saviour. Through our witnessing, the Holy Spirit can convince others, as He did with us. To share the Gospel is *to tell the good news of what has happened to me, not the good news of someone else* (Phil Brandt [PBrandt@cu-portland.edu](mailto:PBrandt@cu-portland.edu)). The Holy Trinity is with us to bless us. Amen.

Carlos Walter Winterle, Cape Town 15 June 2014