

Christ Church Federated 6/11/17 SERMONB

“3 -1-3”

Rev. Anderson

Would you please pray with me?

Holy and mysterious God, We ask you especially this Sunday morning to reach into our very being and help us get our minds around the difficulty of understanding your nature. Work in our minds and our Spirits and make us one with you. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

I hope you enjoyed sharing the reading of Psalm 8 as much as I did. It is difficult and too often misleading to have a favorite Psalm or section of scripture. The more I study the more I appreciate all of them. If you talk to any of those who take part in our Bible Studies, they will tell you I often get quite excited by what I find in the Bible.

This Sunday is a time dedicated to the Trinity, the nature of our **One** God in **Three** Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I have to admit that the Trinity can be a difficult idea to get your mind around. It has led to much discussion, some leading to violence, and sometimes to arcane and abstract theological arguments that make most of us want to walk away from the whole concept.

In one of the articles I was reading to prepare for this Sunday, the author, a pastor, recounts one of his seminary professors trying to help student understanding jokingly tried to explain it to them: “It makes perfect sense. God is three . . . is one . . . is three. Get it?”

“Uh . . .”

Let me fall back on my position as a retired engineer; In our Gospel lesson, Jesus tells us to: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. That should be good enough for me to use the formula.

However, I have always been suspicious of formulas without proof and would not want to send you home with old standby “because I said so.”

The truth is, the Trinity is a great mystery that is hard to understand and even harder to explain. And yet, it lies at the foundation of what we Christians believe about God. Almost every creed of the church affirms our belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We

even devote a Sunday in the church Calendar to this mystery. But do we have any idea what we're doing?

Is the Trinity just an obscure doctrine that we give lip service to because the church calendar tells us to? Does it have anything to do with our daily living? Think about it—what does the Trinity mean to you? It's worth pondering and praying over.

In Scripture, we have heard about the three persons of the Trinity. We have recalled how God has been revealed to us in three distinct ways.

That takes me back to Psalm 8 in which we read of the amazing love of our Creator God. ¹ O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ... When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; ⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals^[a] that you care for them?"

God, our Creator, the person in God that Jesus call Father is biblical and full of love for the men and women created with everything else. This is a God of every strand of DNA, everything that makes each of us a unique being created in God's image and likeness.

One way that God teaches us how to love creation and one another is in the person of Jesus Christ.

And in Jesus' death and resurrection, God becomes our Redeemer. Now, we spend a lot of time in the church talking about Jesus. We learn about Jesus' teaching, his example, his healing, and his love. The gospel stories give us something tangible to hold onto. Jesus gives us all sorts of guidance on how to live our lives. It's not hard to find ways that Jesus is relevant to our lives. Just count how many cars have the bumper sticker: "What Would Jesus Do?"

What about the Holy Spirit? For many of us, the Spirit is very relevant to our daily living. We recognize the Spirit's activity all around us: in those little nudges to call someone or pray for someone, in the peace that surrounds us when we undergo surgery, in the inspiration that comes when we're praying, in the committee meetings where truth is spoken and consensus is reached.

Many of us know the Spirit as our sustainer, our inspiration, our daily guide. We see daily evidence of God our Creator. We strive to follow the concrete example of Jesus the Christ. We look for signs of the Holy Spirit around us. Individually, the three persons of the Trinity make sense to us. But what does it mean for the three to be one and the one to be three?

What this image reveals to me is that in God there is a living, loving community. From the beginning of time until the end of the age, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have existed as a holy community of love and grace. To put it another way, God is community.

So, as we reflect on the Trinity, don't let it be just a vague, dry doctrine for you. Don't write it off as something that's just too complicated for us to understand. Don't leave it to the seminary professors to debate about.

Right now, in Christ Church, we need that community. We need to be together, together as we create again a tight family of faith and work, together and we walk with love the path Jesus demonstrated for us, together as we follow those little nudges of the Holy Spirit that give us wisdom and strength to follow that path.

Let's think about the community of love that has been within God since the beginning of time. Let's accept God's invitation to join in that community. As we see real, concrete examples of how God has created us, redeemed us, and sustained us, let us respond with love and gratitude. Let us add our love to the Trinity's communion of love. Let us be the example of the Unity of God.