

Year C – Trinity Sunday – June 15, 2025

Pastor Megan Floyd

John 16:12-15

Athanasian Creed

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is God and the Holy Spirit... the Three-in-One. Amen.

Today is Holy Trinity Sunday... now I have several clergy friends who prefer to gloss over this one, but given how cloudy our understanding of the Trinity is, I thought we should dig in, yes?

So today... Trinity Sunday... is a different sort of festival... in that *what* we are celebrating is actually... our church doctrine... it is the church's explanation of God's nature as three-in-one... one-in-three... or rather, we should say...

Today we celebrate our almost understanding of God's nature.

I say almost, because... it isn't perfect... no description we can imagine or create will truly capture who God is... and that's also the point.

Nothing we can say about God will fully describe God's being because God is massive and ultimately beyond our full understanding.

God is mystery... and wonder... and awe...

And yet... This massive and mysterious God yearns for a relationship with us... a personal relationship with humanity...

God wanted that so much that God came and walked with us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Our great and powerful God... in a poor and humble human body.

God came and shared our joy and our pain... lived a human life with us... and submitted himself to our most incredibly violent actions... all to show us how much God was invested in this relationship.

And after Jesus defeated death, and was resurrected from the tomb... he continued to share life with us before ascending to heaven, but not before drawing our attention to the Holy Spirit...

Our advocate... the Holy Spirit of God... the very breath of God that fills our lungs and permeates our lives... God who surrounds us... and lives within us.

God, the mighty and powerful creator... Jesus... our humble redeemer and friend... and Spirit... the one who sustains us and saturates our world...

Distinct in their divinity but together as one... one God.

“One God in trinity, and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being... the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty.”

Makes perfect sense, yes?

As humans, in a relationship, we want to set parameters... we want to understand and know the other person... We like to believe that fully knowing another is actually possible.

For example... my parents have been married for forty-nine years. I'd say they know each other very well... they can anticipate each other's reactions and moods. But occasionally, they still surprise each other...

And my husband and I have been married almost twenty-two years... we respond in unison so often that we suspect we might share a brain.

But we are still – all of us – separate people with different perspectives on life.

Think about *your* closest relationship... perhaps with your spouse... or a sibling or cousin... maybe a life-long best friend. You know this person through and through... you can describe and anticipate this person's thoughts and reactions...

You have laughed together... cried together... and yet, you are not them... they are not you...

Even the person you know the most is distinct from you in such a way that prevents you from ever fully understanding what it is... to *be* them...

And your person... the one you have in mind now... is human...

How much more than that is our God?

With God... full knowledge and understanding will always be... just beyond our reach.

And that's ok.

For us to be invested in our relationships with anyone, but particularly with God, we must invest our time in them. We must share our full life with them... laugh and cry together... learn and grow together.

With God... Jesus... Spirit... we dwell in our learning and growing through prayer, worship, and spending time in the Scriptures... laughing together... crying together... giving thanks for God's enduring faithfulness.

In our scriptures, we read and relive God's interactions with our ancestors so that we can be attuned to God's interactions with us. Because God did not stop acting after Revelation was written!

We come together in worship and praise, and we wait for the Lord to come to us... to meet us in our lives... we nurture our relationship with God so that when God shows up, we recognize the one who calls us beloved.

Our doctrine of the Trinity... our best attempt at describing God's three-in-oneness... wasn't handed to the disciples as a list of terms and conditions to accompany the Holy Spirit...

This doctrine... this way of understanding... developed over a few hundred years of faithful followers of Jesus trying to make sense of what happened...

trying to understand how these events fit in with the Hebrew scriptures and laws, and with the writings and teachings they'd gathered since Jesus's death and resurrection...

The Trinity is our best attempt at describing God's divine presence *in and with and through* all things in all places... for all time and even outside of time.

Our understanding of the Trinity came from those who dedicated their time and attention to their relationship with God... and allowed that relationship to reveal new discoveries about our Creator... Redeemer... and Sustainer.

The Three-in-one... One-in-three.

However, what we celebrate today is not the doctrine itself per se, but that this idea gave us a new lens through which to revisit Scripture... a new perspective to help us understand our interactions with the Divine.

This new perspective helped us realize that God... Jesus... Spirit... have always been... and were always there... and will be until the end of time... eternally together, yet separate... and eternally one.

And so, this doctrine is the lens through which we now hear Jesus's parting words to his disciples... on the night in which he was betrayed.

Jesus knows they cannot fully grasp the meaning of all that is about to occur...

and that they won't fully understand everything he has taught them up until that point, until after he has defeated death.

He knows that they will need to *remember* his words to understand... but he promises them that they will have help.

God's Holy Spirit will surround them and guide them toward truth... will guide them in their continued living as disciples of Jesus.

God's Holy Spirit will permeate their lives and continue to glorify God... to make God known for them... just as the Holy Spirit continues to glorify God for us.

Jesus says of the Holy Spirit that it will continue to make Jesus known to them... because it will guide them in his teaching... just as Jesus' teaching has made God the Father known.

The inspiration and guidance we receive from the Holy Spirit is not independent of God or Jesus... for the Spirit and Jesus and God are one.

And yet... exactly how it is that God... Jesus... Spirit so saturates our very being remains a mystery that we know is true.

We know it is true because we feel God all around us, we share stories of encountering God, and we do our best with our limited language to describe God's awesomeness... knowing that the full scope of God is just beyond our grasp.

Kallistos Ware was an English bishop and theologian of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and he wrote,

"We see that it is not the task of Christianity to provide easy answers to every question, but to make us progressively aware of a mystery. God is not so much the object of our knowledge, as the cause of our wonder."

It is our *wonder* that keeps us invested in this amazing relationship with our Creator... and it is our awe that reminds us who we are and whose we are...

We seek the triune God who reveals themselves to us as three... and yet one... the source of our life and our salvation...

A divine mystery that we can explore for our whole lives, knowing and accepting that full knowledge is not for us in this life.

And that's ok.

We can celebrate our almost understanding, using the doctrine of the Trinity as our lens through which we read, and grow in awareness of God's story...

Always leaving room for wonder and awe for our Creator... Redeemer... and Sustainer... the three-in-one... and one-in-three.

Amen.