

Holy Trinity

5-30-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“The festival of the Holy Trinity celebrates the mystery of God, both transcendent and immanent. Though the nature of God is beyond our rational explanation, we ascribe glory to the one who is holy, whose glory fills the whole earth. Christians are born of the water and the Spirit, and when we make the sign of the cross, we remember in our baptism in the name of the triune God. Born anew in baptism, and nourished at the Lord’s Table, we now live as witnesses to God’s love for us and all the world.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Come Thou Almighty King”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 29

“Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,^[a]
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

² Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy array.

³ The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, upon many waters.

⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful,
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars,
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf,
and Sir’ion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness,
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to whirl,^[b]
and strips the forests bare;
and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”

¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king for ever.

¹¹ May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!”

Hymn of Praise: [“Holy God, We Praise Your Name”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Almighty God our Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, renewing and fulfilling creation by your eternal Spirit, and revealing your glory through our Lord Jesus Christ: Cleanse us from doubt and fear, and enable us to worship you, with you Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, living and reigning, now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Isaiah 6:1-8](#)

2nd Reading: [Romans 8:12-17](#)

The Gospel: [John 3:1-17](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Father Most Holy”](#)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

From the earliest times of recorded history we find that mankind has searched for the answers behind life and the universe. How did it all begin? What is life and the source of life? What is the origin of the creative order? What are the whys and wherefores of death? What is the cause of man’s actions – loving, hating, killing, reproducing, learning, fighting, and so on? All of the good and bad in the human experience must be attributed to something, doesn’t it?

Most of the ancient people attributed the control over most acts of life to a series of gods each with their own task or domain. These gods almost always took the form of a human or animal image which could be comprehended. Thus many gods could easily be related to and worshipped as super humans who could answer the needs of people according to their sphere of responsibility. Therefore there were gods of war, love, thunder, fertility, harvest, death, etc.

Into this world were thrust a nomadic people who were very familiar with the practices of the pagan world and its numerous gods. One would think that they would naturally inherit the same practice and there is some indication that at times they did enter the world of such gods on a limited basis. For instance, these people, the Hebrews, had limited engagement with a god of the harvest and of course the golden calf during the exodus. But, outside of these limited examples, the Hebrews were privileged to comprehend only one God or the practice known as monotheism. This God was the creative being of all creation and of all life.

In the creation story we come to the understanding that this God was a form somewhere out there living in the heavens beyond the firmament. He set things in motion and created the heavens and the earth, placing human kind in charge of the earth which He had created. The story tells us that mankind was created in God’s image giving the indication that there was some kind of likeness between God and man. Many would then give God a human like form of a kindly bearded old man sitting on a throne in a perfect form of an earthly place known as heaven.

Although this God was the God of all of the world, He had a special relationship with His chosen people, the family and ancestry of Abraham who became known as the Israelites or Hebrews. This God was one who would reward His people and intervene in their lives to help them when He saw fit to do so. On the other hand, He would harshly punish His people when they would stray from the laws he had set as a foundation to their relationship with Him and each other. He thus revealed Himself through this law centered relationship based upon the human relationship of father and child. This was within the understanding of the limited comprehension of the human mind.

Life and creation were still clouded with mystery and when pondered held mankind in overwhelming awe of the power of the unknown and of a God who was seen as some kind of super human being who was all powerful. This God was held in such awe and fear that his name Yahweh was never to be spoken except in the holy of holies by the high priest.

Therefore to the Israelite, God was to be held in extreme awe and fear, a God who could at any time strike with revenge but who also, when pleased, could act with compassion. It was the concept of a powerful, revengeful, but yet benevolent king. He was a God out there residing in the heavens who had total power over life but was not, by in large, actively participating in life. He almost stood over and against the life of His creation and could find both pleasure and displeasure with humankind. This is the background of the Jews during Jesus' time and gives insight into people like Nicodemus who confronted Jesus. The confrontation was in light of Jesus' differing message to that of Jewish tradition.

In many respects this God of Nicodemus, who is seen as "out there" or "up there" standing as an ever present judge, full of revenge instilling fear, is still the God which many, even today, believe or comprehend. It is almost a childlike comprehension which we first learned in Sunday school. It is the God held in human likeness or form who dwells in a most perfect place like an earthly Garden of Eden, an earthly utopia of beauty and peace. In this heaven God is often pictured with a judgment book listing our earthly acts.

Such a childlike concept of God is a distorted glimpse of the nature of God. In order to help clarify this glimpse of Himself as a super human form lingering out on the fringes of human life and existence, He needed to be comprehended as being vitally, realistically, and compassionately involved within the life of His creation. He had to show that He was a God totally involved within life, in fact the very source of life. This meant only one thing he had to immerse himself into a human form who would live and walk on the face of the earth. This is how He would reveal the image of a true and perfect life motivated out of love. In doing this a more comprehensible glimpse of God would be seen.

Of course this further revelation was the incarnation or who we know as Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. It was through Jesus that there was no mistake in comprehending that God was not out there in some far off kingdom away from and separated from life. He was and is indeed the very core or essence of life. This is what Paul Tillich calls the ground of being. Such a concept or revelation is far from some kind of ruling superhuman king

set apart in his kingdom and was beyond the tradition Jewish beliefs as found in Nicodemus. For many today they may wish the ancient traditional thought to be true so as to keep God out of life in order that they may do what they wish.

Jesus gives us this glimpse into God as a God who is actively involved in life and is the very essence of life itself. He further reveals that life is as eternal as God Himself. Through Jesus we know that we share in this eternity of life when we too are driven and motivated by love as the ultimate power and force of God in us. Therefore Jesus who called himself the Son of Man was God revealing Himself as a living vital reality within the lives of mankind. This is the purest glimpse we have of true life and love for it is a glimpse into the very nature of God.

This was all well and good but when this perfect example of life and love would be gone as all human bodies experience, what then? Would this God cease being a God of life and retreat back to some kind of “out there” kingdom? This would not be the case nor could it be the case since the very nature of God as the essence of life cannot be changed even though man’s comprehension may be different. Jesus clearly stated that even though his human form may vanish God’s presence as the core of life would always be within His creation. He stated, “I will ask the Father, and he will send another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.” Nicodemus’ rigid beliefs could not fathom such a loving God being so present within life as many today also deny it by their how they live. But by His life and message Jesus confirmed that God is actively involved and reveals His message throughout all of life and not just through the rituals, laws, and judgmental thinking of the past.

This summarizes the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity need not have a complex explanation which gives human names to a complex understanding of God. It simply is a way to symbolize that God is the creative force behind and in all life, God the Father; He has given us the perfect living example of true life and love through Jesus, God the Son; and He continues to be the very essence of all life and thereby abides in and around us, God the Holy Spirit. It is through these continuing revelations of God that we come to believe, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Anthem: [“Ain’t Dat Good News”](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e’er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Father and Creator of every good and perfect gift, we stand in awe and wonder of your creative process knowing that your hand is at work through it all. May we always be reminded to take the time to pause in order to see your continuing revelation. Through your Son, Jesus, we know of your amazing love for all of your creation and even for us who so readily turn our backs from you when it suits us. It is your love which not only saves us but gives us hope. You always are there to comfort us when we need comforting, and there with your presence to lift us up in order to extend our love to those who may be in desperate need of our helping hand. We give you thanks for your presence throughout life.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della , Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"](#)

Announcements

Services will be outdoors unless inclement weather conditions force us indoors. Face masks and social distancing outdoors are not required. An email will be sent late Saturday afternoons stating whether indoors or outdoors.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291