

Three Persons: One God

John 16:12-15

Trinity Sunday, 1st Sunday after Pentecost, Series C

Companion Texts: Numbers 6:22-27, Psalm 150, Romans 5:1-5 (1 John 5:5-12 Alternate)

Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (1st Timothy 1:2)

The portion of John's Gospel assigned for this Trinity Sunday [Weekend], the first Sunday [weekend] after the Pentecost, returns us to the Upper Room where Jesus celebrated the Seder Meal with His Disciples the night before He died on the cross for our sins.

It is appropriate that our Gospel Lesson today records the reference Jesus makes to God the Father and the Holy Spirit on this Trinity Sunday [weekend] as we begin this season of the church year that would equip us to go out into the world to spread the Good News of Salvation.

This season of Pentecost covers about half of the liturgical year. Perhaps that would give us some indication of just how important our task of spreading the Gospel really is.

Jesus had just made clear to His followers that He would be returning to His Father. He was also clear that His departure would result in their persecution. They were plunged into confusion, frustration, and despair.

Jesus then went on to promise them the Holy Spirit, whom He would send as their Counselor and Advocate. Jesus said (in the opening words of our Gospel): "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth."

We have a God who offers us more than we can possibly comprehend --- a God who continually unfolds His greatness, power, and glory.

The early followers of Jesus were not ready --- at that moment in time --- for all that He could have revealed to them. (But then, neither are we at any given point in our spiritual walk.) Jesus teaches and guides us only to the degree that we are ready and able to receive. His greatness is limitless and unsearchable. He always has much more for His disciples --- including us today --- than they can understand.

So today --- on this Trinity Sunday [weekend] --- Jesus acquaints us with God the Holy Spirit. He puts us under His care and teaching. He sends Him to be in us and with us.

The Holy Spirit is God, active in our lives today. He is God in and with us now, to continue the teaching and illuminating work of the Son, Jesus. He is the God of wisdom --- wisdom that moves us forward as we grow in faith. He is the God of Christian growth.

Christians are blessed by the Holy Spirit in special ways. The Holy Spirit speaks to us and leads us. As He does so, there results

- 1) much more insight into truth,
- 2) much more vision for the future and
- 3) much more appreciation of the Savior.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead His followers into all truth. The Holy Spirit gives Christians a special understanding of God's divine truth. As a guide leading us through the wilderness --- as a teacher instructing us as His students --- the Holy Spirit leads Christians towards understanding of the will of God.

Truth has many dimensions.

The world has truth in medicine, in geology, and in history, in poetry, and in art. Awareness of any of these dimensions is a discovery made possible by God.

But the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us illuminates dark places in our lives. That truth exposes what is false --- and fractured --- and fatal. That truth fosters what is right and whole, and vital. That truth exposes what is evil and hateful. That truth nourishes what is good and loving.

The truth of the Holy Spirit gives us insight into the mystery of life.

Jesus is **THE** truth. The Holy Spirit increases our understanding of the truth of God. He leads us into God as the very atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being.

God makes life possible;

God puts life together;

God holds life together;

God makes life worthwhile.

God is life. When we follow the Holy Spirit, the will of God becomes -- more and more -- a familiar country. The Holy Spirit gives us divine insight. With Him leading us, we expect to understand more of how God sees our trials and pleasures, our plans and problems, our identity and our relationships.

We come to see that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Through the Holy Spirit, God becomes real to us. He is nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet. Because of the Holy Spirit, we eagerly follow God's plan for us.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will "...tell you of what is yet to come."

The phrase, "...what is yet to come," refers to the possibilities for the future. They are expectations yet to be fulfilled; they are hopes yet to be realized.

The phrase, "...what is yet to come," includes what is coming to the world --- and Who is coming again to the world. It includes what the world is coming to, and what you and I can become.

From the Holy Spirit comes the awareness of the future promised by God, opened up by God, and shaped by God. From the Holy Spirit comes a vision of both possibility and destiny.

On the one hand, the phrase, "...what is yet to come," refers to things such as the end of the world, the final return of Jesus Christ, and the arrival of the new heavens and earth. It includes the Resurrection, the judgment, and eternal life. It points to the victory of Christ the Lamb upon His throne. It inspires the vision of multitudes without number singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

On the other hand, the phrase, "...what is yet to come," refers to all the possibilities open to us because of God. It encourages us with hope for the future by sketching the changes that come through faith and grace. No matter what our circumstances, the Holy Spirit gives us the certainty there is more to come --- more fulfillment of the promises of God --- more growth in the grace of Jesus Christ.

God's beckoning words point us toward heaven.

God's words also teach us how to live in the world here and now.

The God of today is also the God of all our tomorrows. He is comfort for the future. He is Hope Divine. From the councils of heaven, the Holy Spirit gives us a vision of the kingdom of God.

A good teacher "opens things up" for us. That is what the Holy Counselor does for Christians, and for God's church on earth. He opens the door to God's Will and plan for us. He sets before us a door that no man can shut --- and then escorts us through it. He is, indeed, the God of hope.

When, at times, life seems meaningless or empty, let us look to the Holy Spirit. When the future seems closed, let us ask God to show us the way. When the possibilities seem endless and confusing, let us listen for God's word about "...what is yet to come."

Through Him we can look forward in confidence.

Jesus told His followers that the Holy Spirit, "...will bring glory to [Him] by taking from what is [His] and making it known to [us]." Much more appreciation of the Savior springs to life when the Holy Spirit touches our lives. Much more adoration of Jesus breaks into words and deeds when --- through Scripture and Sacrament --- we are taught by the Holy Spirit.

Not until the Spirit is allowed to glorify Christ in us and through us will the Christian adventure become a way of life for us. Not until God's glory captures us will His happiness reach into our lives. Not until then will we be fully equipped against the assaults of the world, the devil, and our own flesh.

Spiritual things are discerned in spiritual ways. When the Christian life begins to wander, let us look to the Holy Spirit. Let us ask Him to glorify Christ for us and in us. When we turn to the Word of God, or come to worship --- When we talk with God in prayer --- when we do God's will --- let us listen to the Holy Spirit.

All that Jesus promised His disciples is ours. It happens to us individually, but it is best experienced together.

The insight into God's truth is for the Christian fellowship --- the church --- and for its members. The vision of things to come is given to the Body of Christ --- the church --- and to its individual members. The realization of the glory of God flourishes in the family of believers.

For the ever-growing enrichment of life in Christ we need to come together as His people. In worship and study --- in fellowship --- in ministry together --- we need the company of believers.

In this fellowship we can know --- and be changed. In this fellowship we shall hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev. 2:7).

Amen. May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen (Philippians 4:7)