

Sunday Sermonettes: Holy Trinity Sunday: May 27, 2018

Sermon Text: John 3:16

Sermonette Theme: Our Triune God Saves

Today we celebrate Holy Trinity Sunday. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most difficult doctrines for Christians to talk about. Usually we have it straight in our minds, it's when we try to put it into words and explain it completely that we can get confused and get it wrong.

The Trinity is one of the biggest doctrines in a group of doctrines called, the Articles of Faith. That simply means that there are certain doctrines that God lays out in his Word that we don't understand by our reason, we have to believe them by faith. Creation and the resurrection are others in the Articles of Faith group.

These doctrines are not about what we can prove with logic or reason, science or experiment. We believe these things because the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to cling to what God says.

With the doctrine of the Trinity, God simply says I am one and I am three. Most of the time this would be a contradiction to us, \$1 and \$3 are different from one another. But not with God. God is so much greater than we are, and yet he wants us to understand who he is and what he does. We have to remember that language is an imperfect medium for really understanding God. When we go to heaven we will experience the greatness of God in all things, not just language. Still, God uses this imperfect medium to reveal to us his important work of loving us and saving us.

This morning we will look at the important work of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit using one of the most well-known portions of Scripture: John 3:16 and the verses around it. May God bless us as we look at his love which shows itself in what he has done to save us.

### Sermonette #1: God the Father's Love For Us

Nicodemus knew about God the Father. The Israelites at the time of Jesus knew the God of the Old Testament as a God of power and might, strength and deliverance. The love that the Lord wanted them to see had long been lost. Even the name Jahweh – the name of God's love for his people – had been turned into a name to be afraid of. It was the name that they dare not say, lest they be punished.

Nicodemus came to Jesus to have Jesus explain to him how his teachings went along with the Old Testament prophecies. Nicodemus was educated religiously and Scripturally, yet he didn't have any idea what Jesus was talking about. All this talk about God's love shown in the Messiah who would be a Savior from sin and death was largely foreign to Nicodemus. He needed help.

Jesus said to him, "For God so loved the world."

This was a different phrase for Nicodemus. The Jews thought that God so loved the Jews that he would save the Jews. As for the rest of the world, God would have to deal with them.

With this phrase Jesus unlocks one of the greatest teachings in the Bible. God loves you. After reading Jesus words here, there can be no question. If God loves the world he loves you. If you find yourself questioning that love, the answer is here. If you think that you are unforgivable the answer is here, God loves you. Don't get me wrong, God doesn't love foolishly. He knows your sins and sees your sins. His love is shown in that he is willing to forgive us of our sins and not destroy us on the spot when we disobey.

If God didn't love us there would be many ways he could show that to us. However we see that love in one very important action. He sent his Son to make it possible that every man, woman, and child who has ever been or will ever be on the earth can be saved.

That is love, God loving the world.

## Sermonette # 2: God the Son who Saves

Nicodemus was confused about a Messiah that would save people from their sins. The teaching of Messiah had become one of national and military significance. The same false teaching is here today. If you have been following the news, the US moved their consulate to Jerusalem causing quite an uproar. Why was that such a big deal? Even today many people, Jews and Christians alike, believe that when everything is ready, the Messiah will come and make Israel the greatest nation on earth with Jerusalem as his capital. Allies of Israel will then reap the rewards.

This was the Messiah that Nicodemus was also thinking about. Yet, when Jesus talked, he talked about a completely different Messiah. Jesus' Messiah was not a military leader or a great national president, Jesus; he was lifted up like the bronze serpent in the desert so that all who believe in him will be saved from sin and death.

Jesus said. **God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.**

God could have chosen to show his love in many different ways, but the way he DID show his love shows us the way to salvation.

Jesus came to earth to save sinners like you and me. Jesus didn't come to assess the situation and make a plan, he already had the plan from the Father. Jesus already stated the plan, God loved the world and wanted to save the world.

Jesus accomplished this plan of saving us in two ways. God said that to gain heaven a person must be sinless. Adam and Eve started sinless, but then gave in to temptation. From then on, sin has been a part of us that we cannot escape. We are born in sin and we will die in sin. Sin is not a momentary lapse of judgment, it means separation from God and his blessings.

We need someone to remove that separation and make us perfect again. Jesus came to do that. He came to remove your sin forever and to give you his perfection.

He lived perfectly because we could not. God said that sin deserved punishment. Not just a scolding or having privileges removed. Sin deserved eternal death in hell. Along with living perfectly, Jesus also had to satisfy the punishment that our sins deserved. He did this by suffering and dying on the cross.

He shed his blood on that cross to remove our sins, to take away our guilt, to make us perfect, and to restore that perfect relationship with God.

What could be more simple, Nicodemus? What could be more simple people of the world that God loves?

Yet, we make it difficult don't we? We make it difficult when we think that we can do what Jesus did. We want to think that we can be good enough to make God happy. Can we be as good as Jesus was, perfect? No. We need Jesus because God doesn't say be good, he says be perfect.

Sometimes we think that we can do what Jesus did and pay for some of our own sins by doing equally good things. Can we do that? No, God says that one sin is too much. One sin means death and hell. We cannot be perfect. We need God the Son to save.

This is God the Son, who saves us from our sins and gives us heaven that we don't deserve.

## Sermonette # 3: God the Holy Spirit who Gives us what Jesus Won by Faith

The obvious question Nicodemus had been asking all along was, "How?" How will all this be done?" Jesus answer was, "Not through man, but through the Spirit, the breath of life from God."

**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.**

All that God has done in his love, all that Jesus has done for us to save us, mean nothing to us without God the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "**The man without the Spirit cannot accept the things that come from the Spirit for they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them.**" The Holy Spirit works through the Word to create faith where there is none and to build and strengthen faith in those who have it. In our sermon from last week, we saw in Ezekiel that it is the Holy Spirit who brings life to those who are spiritually dead in sin and unbelief. Even in our Gospel this morning we saw that it is the Spirit that gives birth to the Spirit.

Can we do what the Spirit does? Sometimes we think we can. We think that we can do it our own way. We can trust in ourselves and not in Jesus to save ourselves. Sometimes we think we don't need to hear the Word to remain strong in faith, we think that we are fine without it. Are we fine? Can we trust in ourselves and despise the life-giving Gospel for other more pressing family or earthly matters? No, the Bible is clear, "**Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.**"

The Holy Spirit does not work independently of the Gospel, they are forever joined. As we hear and study the Word we have the promise of our loving God, that the Holy Spirit is at work to build faith and that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

It is the Holy Spirit who brings all the gifts that God in his love wants us to have, that Jesus has won for us. The Holy Spirit brings us the gifts of faith, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation and makes them our own through the faith he works.

#### Sermonette # 4: Our Triune God is Worthy of Praise

As we look this morning at the great love of our Triune God, what is our reaction? Are we counting the minutes until the sermon's over? Maybe we are relieved there is no Bible Class today? Maybe we have heard it before and can fill in the blanks before the pastor even says it? Maybe we are confused like Nicodemus? Maybe we are joyful to hear this good news?

When we stand in the presence of God we should always have the same reaction. It is Isaiah's reaction from our first reading.

When Isaiah stood in the presence of God and his majesty, he did not take it for granted, he did not try to show God his goodness, he did not try to reason with God, his first reaction was to fall on his knees in humility and repentance and show that he was not worthy of any of the blessings of God.

This needs to be our first reaction when we hear about the love of our God. "I am ruined. I am unclean. I am a sinful human being who doesn't deserve to be loved and saved."

Our second response is to listen to the Lord to hear the love that he has for us in forgiving us, **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. --- Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.**

Our final reaction is one of praise to God the Father who loves us, God the Son who saves us and God the Spirit who gives us all that Jesus won for us by working faith in our hearts. This praise should be in our hearts and minds, but also in our words and actions.

Isaiah showed his praise by being ready and willing to go to work for the Lord. This is the highest form of praise that we can and should give to our God. Jesus said, "**Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.**"

Our service and thanks to the Lord includes our daily life, our work life, our interactions with our children and our spouse and the way that we speak about our God and Savior to others.

May we always thank and praise Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the love, forgiveness and eternal life that he gives us freely. Amen.