

Sermon June 11, 2017 – Holy Trinity Sunday

Lord and Messiah

Acts 2:14a, 22–36



Introduction:

Dear friends in Christ, today we observe Trinity Sunday, a Sunday to explore the meaning of the Trinity, that is, God in three persons.

And as it happens, when we talk about the Holy Trinity, it's usually to emphasize the distinctive roles of the three persons that form the one true God. We do think and talk about Father primarily in terms of his work of creating and sustaining the world. This is what we confess in the Small Catechism when we say, "I believe that God has made me and

all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them."

Then, we think and talk about the Son primarily in terms of his work in saving us from our sins and restoring us to a proper relationship with God. This too we confess in the Small Catechism when we say, "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."

And we think and talk about the Holy Spirit primarily in terms of his work in bringing us to faith through the Word and the Sacraments and strengthening and keeping us in that faith. This is what we confess in the Small Catechism when we say, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith."

Now, there is certainly nothing wrong with thinking or talking about the Trinity in this way; it's both biblical and true. However, it's also interesting to note the way the Bible sometimes emphasizes what the three persons of the Trinity do together as the one true God and this is what Peter had in mind as he speaks to the crowd in our text this morning. It happened on the day of Pentecost, the day when God had poured out the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers. That day people had gathered to see what was going on but did not comprehend what was happening, some actually thought that the disciples were drunk.

That's when Peter then explains to the people that had gathered, what was happening. However what becomes surprising in what he was saying is the fact that Pentecost wasn't so much about the Holy Spirit but it was about Jesus.

As you see, in preaching about Jesus, Peter shows us how God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together to bring about our Salvation.

The text begins with Peter emphasizing the absolutely foundational fact that

I. God raised Jesus from the dead.

God raised Jesus from the dead. Now, notice that Peter tells as a fact. In his message we see that he doesn't need to argue or convince people that the resurrection of Jesus really happened, but that it did.

After all there are witness people who can give witness, it is what it is. (vv 22–24, 32). And those hearing him will probably have no argument to contradict Peter because they could have already believed that the resurrection was a fact, maybe they heard it in the community from the eyewitness directly or by way of rumours.

Peter's point, then, is not to establish the fact of the resurrection, but to explain its significance. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean to the people back then? And why not what does it mean for us today? The significance and meaning was already understood by several people, hundreds of years even before it happened. King David Understood it.

David recognized that his Lord and Messiah, Jesus was beside him. This Jesus who was going to be brought out of the grave, the one whose soul was not going to be abandoned to Sheol, or let his body be corrupted was already with David. Therefore, his faith would not be shaken by all the hardships that he was encountering in life (v 25), for the one in whom he was trusting is a Lord of life.

And that fact produced joy in David and more, it was the confidence and hope in Christ, but also the hope in the certainty that God would not abandon Jesus (vv 26–27). David knew that Jesus' death would take away the sin that separated him and all people from God, so if God did not abandon Jesus, and if he had been joined to Jesus as we are in Baptism, God would not abandon him either.

David declared his certainty that in Jesus God would reveal to him the "paths of life" by which God would lead him to eternal joy in God's presence (v 28).

Peter then reminds his hearers that David was a prophet and that he had received a promise from God that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever (vv 29–30). And this descendant is Jesus (vv 31–32).

But there is more, the fact that Jesus, whom some of the people who were there, killed and crucified, was raised from the dead is evidence of God's approval, and now Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. That whatever he did for the world was satisfactory to God.

As you he Peter was focusing on what Jesus did. Only then does Peter turn to the meaning of Pentecost, which, again, is not ultimately about the Holy Spirit, but rather about how the Holy Trinity works together for our salvation. And that, our salvation, happens because

II. God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah.

God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah. That was the real meaning of Pentecost. The fact that the Pentecost crowd had themselves seen the fulfillment of God's promise to pour out his Holy Spirit on his people in the age of the Messiah is God's proof to them that God had made Jesus to be both Lord and Christ (Messiah) (v 36). And that meant they had all the blessings David had proclaimed in his time.

But what does it mean for us to know that Jesus is Lord and Messiah? What does the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost mean for us today? It means the same thing for you and me that it meant for David and Peter: It means that we can recognize that since our Lord and Messiah, Jesus, is beside us, our faith need not be

shaken by all the hardships that we encounter in life (v 25). It means that when you are pressed hard in life, and you begin wondering why, or you can't take it anymore, right there you are given confidence that Christ is beside you, helping and sustaining you to face those hardships and actually come victorious on the other side. How does Christ come to be beside us? Through his word, through the Holy Spirit, and through the means of grace, that is the means how he imparts grace to you, and those means are Baptism and Holy Communion.

And that fact also means that we can experience joy and hope because of our confidence in God's Messiah and our certainty that God will not abandon us.

Why that confidence? It is the confidence that springs out of the fact that Jesus' death on the cross has reconciled us to God by forgiving the sin that separated us.

And that reconciliation joins us to Jesus through Baptism and as God did not abandon Jesus in the grave, we too will be not abandoned or leave us in death, temporal or eternal, instead just as Jesus was raised to life so he, for the sake of Christ will also bring us back to life, life eternal.

But there is more, because in the resurrected Jesus, God has revealed to us the "paths of life." Jesus' death and resurrection is the path by which God will lead us to eternal joy in his presence (v 28).

As you see that's how the Triune God works, all focused in the redeemer.

Conclusion:

On this Festival of the Holy Trinity, God's Word reminds us that, while we often emphasize the distinctive roles of the three persons that comprise the one true God, it is wonderfully true, as Peter reminds us, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together to accomplish their common will: our salvation.

In his name, amen.