

The Feast of the Holy Trinity
St. John 3:1-15
June 16th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas+

As Moses Lifted Up the Serpent

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord God, heavenly Father, we poor sinners confess that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing, and that, left to ourselves, we die and perish in sin, since that which is born of the flesh is flesh and cannot see the Kingdom of God. But we beseech Thee, grant us Thy grace and mercy, and for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, send Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, that being regenerate, we may firmly believe the forgiveness of sins, according to Thy promise in baptism; and that we may daily increase in brotherly love, and in other good works, until we at last obtain eternal salvation, through the same, Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today we celebrate and give special honor to the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost Who is Lord of all and the One and Only True God to be worshiped and adored. It is not that we do not worship and adore Him on other days. In fact, the worship of the Triune God is interwoven into our Liturgy every week. He is proclaimed when we remember our Holy Baptism, the Name placed upon us, in the Invocation at the beginning of the service, the *Gloria Patri*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Kyrie*, the endings of all the Collects, the Creed, especially the Athanasian Creed which we confessed today, and He is preached in the Sermon from the pulpit. He is prayed to in the General Prayer, honored in the Proper Preface, praised in the *Sanctus*, prayed to in the Lord's Prayer, praised in the *Agnus Dei*, and glorified in the *Benedicamus* and His blessings are bestowed upon us in the *Benediction*. That is to say, from start to finish the Triune God is worshiped and adored by all those of us who practice the historic Liturgy. This is not only practiced by us Lutherans but by all those in the holy, apostolic and catholic faith who use this historic Liturgy.

So much so does the Triune God pervade our Liturgy that the addition of this Feast into the "official" life of the Church did not take place until 1338 A.D.; that is, the 14th century. Now, it certainly found its way into the liturgical calendars of certain parishes, specifically in England and where modern-day France and Germany are located, which is why the Feast of the Holy Trinity is a "high" Feast among Lutherans. This Feast in its beginning was celebrated as the Octave of Whitsunday, which we celebrated last week. That is why the Propers for this Sunday (at least the lessons) do not really seem to fit the theme of the Holy Trinity. The Lessons are really a continuation of the truths about the Holy Ghost that we heard last week; that He has been sent by our Lord + Jesus, the Christ to proclaim the good works that our Lord did to all those who receive preaching and the sacraments.

This is why the Gospel for today talks about Holy Baptism and the Holy Ghost's role in Holy Baptism. Now, even though this sacrament embodies the work of Christ, for it is our Lord + Jesus Who was incarnate in the flesh of man and Who fulfilled perfectly the whole Law and will of the Heavenly

Father, and was lifted up on the tree of the holy cross for the redemption of mankind, and was buried and on the third day rose again, and it is into His death that we are buried and it is in His resurrection that we have the promise of eternal life, even though Christ is at the center of Holy Baptism, this is in fact a work of the entire Triune God, One God in three Persons, equal in majesty and honor. For our Lord Christ suffers and dies for us because the Father so wills it, and we receive the redemption promised in the waters of Holy Baptism, because it is the Holy Ghost Who by these holy waters sanctifies us—that is, makes us holy—and cleanses away from us all sin on account of the works and merits of the Christ.

This is why we teach that one must live in his Holy Baptism daily. For even though only ONE Holy Baptism is necessary for our redemption, it is not to be treated as an historic event that happened long ago when we were infant before we could even remember it happening, but it is in fact the water of life; the eternally flowing river of eternal life. And we have access to our Holy Baptism whenever we humbly and in contrition, that is, in sorrow over our sins, confess that we are poor, miserable sinners in need of God's grace, and who have no good thing in us apart from the works of Christ bestowed by the Father through the Holy Ghost, and through that contrite and repentant confession receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness from God Himself through the voice of the pastor.

Therefore, we daily confess our sins, that is, we drown the Old Adam and all the evil and sinful lusts and desires with which he uses to drag us down into Hell, and by the grace of God through the forgiveness of sins and the work of the Holy Ghost for the sake of our faith in the works and merits of our Lord + Jesus Christ, we arise a new man, forgiven and holy in the Triune God's sight. We receive all the benefits that our Lord + Jesus, the Christ won for us on the tree of the holy cross.

Also, in Confession and Absolution, which we also observe publicly every Lord's Day in the *Confiteor* and privately at appointed times throughout the Church's year, we see that it is the entire Triune God Who is acting in this act of forgiveness. For just as in Holy Baptism, it is the Lord Who won forgiveness for us, but it was out of love for His heavenly Father (and His love is expressed in His obedience and sacrifice) that our Lord suffered and died so that we might have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. And it is the Holy Ghost, who by the mouth of the called and ordained minister of the Triune God, proclaims that our sins are forgiven, and we believe that when the called ministers of the Christ proclaim to us that our sins are forgiven, it is as valid and certain in Heaven, as if the Triune God proclaimed it Himself to us.

Such is the case with everyone who is born of the spirit, through water and the spirit. And it is this truth that Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel, did not understand. That which is born of flesh, that is, born of sin and lives under the Law, is flesh. That which is born of spirit, that is, born of the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace and lives under the righteousness of Christ and His perfect fulfilling of the Law and His perfect sacrifice in our place, is spirit. Those who live according to the flesh are unholy, because those who live in and under sin, and choose to remain there, and those who try to redeem themselves by their own righteousness and keeping of the Law, are never righteous enough in God's eyes, even though they may be in the eyes of mankind. However, those who live according to the spirit are holy, because it is the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies and purifies us so that we are holy, for He credits to us our Lord's righteousness and His fulfilling of the Law, therefore we are perfect in the heavenly Father's eyes, just as His Son is perfect in His eyes. The faith that is created in us by the Holy Ghost clings to these works and merits of the Christ; we look outside of ourselves for our salvation, because faith teaches us that there is no good thing living in us apart from our faith in Christ, so we gladly cling in faith to our Lord and Redeemer + Jesus Christ and His work that He did for us on the tree of the holy cross.

Therefore, the Son of Man must be lifted up just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, for in His lifting up on the holy cross; He saved all mankind from their sins. And this is why we celebrate

this lifting up whenever we gather around this Altar to receive His true Body and true Blood in bread and wine. This blessed Sacrament of the Altar, like Holy Baptism, has at its center our Lord + Jesus, but it is the work of the whole Divine Trinity, for again our Lord is lifted up in His Body and His Blood is shed out of obedience to the Father, and when we eat and drink this meal in remembrance of our Lord's once and for all time sacrifice, the Father considers us worthy to receive forgiveness of sins, for we remember and acknowledge by it that our Lord + Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins, and by our eating and drinking we are making a confession of faith that it is His works that save us, and not our own. And the Holy Ghost, assisting us in making that confession of faith bestows the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation.

This is why it is important to celebrate this Feast of the Holy Trinity, even though the One Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are interwoven throughout our Liturgy, and within the blessed Sacraments, and is proclaimed in the preaching of the Word, for this Feast sums up and completes the entire life and work of our Lord + Jesus Christ, which we observe throughout the Church's Year, for this is the only day in the Church Year when not the life and work of Christ is observed, but an article of doctrine—the doctrine of the Triune God. Therefore, we confess our faith today in the words of the Athanasian Creed, which breaks down and unpacks for us how the Persons of the Holy Trinity are interrelated within the One Godhead, and how the Two Natures of our Lord + Jesus Christ subsist within the One Person of our Lord. Rejoice therefore today that our Triune God has loved us all, and all of His creation, so much that the heavenly Father sent His One and Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ into our flesh to redeem us from sin, death and the devil, and that the Father and the Son together sent the Holy Ghost to be our Comforter and Helper in this life, so that we might truly receive the gifts won for us by our Lord's death on the holy cross—the forgiveness of our sins, eternal life and salvation. The Blessed and Holy One True Triune God grant this unto us all! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty and Everlasting God Who hast taught us to know and to confess in true faith that in three persons of equal power and glory Thou art One True and Everlasting God and to be worshiped as such, we beseech Thee, keep us at all times steadfast in this faith against whatsoever may assail us, O Thou, Who livest and reignest, ever, one true God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!