

The Feast of the Holy Trinity  
St. John 3:1-15  
June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
St. Bartholomew Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Pawleys Island, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Unless One Is Born of Water and the Spirit

*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 God, the Creator and Savior of the world, Who hast made Thyself known in the work of man's redemption, as the mystery of the ever adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Three in One and One in Three: reveal in us, we beseech Thee, the full power of this faith, into which we have been planted by Baptism, that, being born of water and of the Spirit, we may by a life of holiness be formed into Thine image here, and rise to Thy blissful presence hereafter, there to join, with the song of the seraphim, in praising Thee, world without end. Amen.

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

Moses, the servant of the Triune Lord God, was commanded by the Lord God to teach Aaron and his sons to bless the people with the same blessing with which we end every Divine Service. The high priest, and his sons, was to turn to the people and bless them with the words, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace." Even in blessing from the Old Testament we see the Holy Trinity. For the one Lord is mentioned three times in this blessing. This is the same blessing which the minister gives to us at the end of the Divine Service when he turns to us and blesses us with the Lord's blessing.

In His explanation of what these words meant for the people, the Triune Lord God declared that this blessing put His Name upon the people. By putting His Name upon the people, He was declaring them to be His people. When we hear these words at the end of the Divine Service by the minister, we are also being declared the Lord's people. He is placing His Name upon us. If we have His Name upon us—if His countenance is upon us—then we truly have peace; the peace of the soul which knows it is reconciled to the Lord God. When our Triune Lord God places His Name upon us His face—His countenance—is also upon us. The Lord God can only direct His countenance, His face, toward those with whom He is not angry. He can only look upon those who have their sins covered over by the righteousness of the Christ.

This is why these words are said by the minister facing the congregation. It is a physical reminder that the Lord has turned His grace upon us, He is no longer looking at us and seeing poor, miserable sinners, but He only sees the righteousness of His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ. The minister facing the congregation teaches us that the Lord has not turned His face away from us on account of our manifold transgressions, but has forgiven them on account of the works and merits of His beloved Son + Jesus. That these words are said at the end of the Divine Service is our final reminder of the Lord's grace toward us; of our forgiveness that we have been hearing about all through the Divine

Service. We are reminded one last time before departing in peace into the world and our lives, that the Triune Lord God has not hid His face from us, but looks upon us and gives us grace and peace.

In the same way that the Divine Service ends with our Lord placing His Name upon us and declaring that we are His people, so also the Service begins. Every Divine Service begins with the Invocation. The minister also turns to the congregation and blesses them by announcing to them the Name that we all bear on account of our Holy Baptisms. The minister faces the congregation and declares to them the Lord has not hid His face—His countenance—from us, but has claimed us to be His very own dear children through the waters of Holy Baptism. The Invocation is a blessing at the beginning of the Divine Service that we receive from the minister. Therefore, the Divine Service is bookended with the blessing of the minister, declaring that the Triune Lord God has placed His Name upon us, and made us His very own people.

Holy Baptism is how we have been declared the people of the Triune Lord God. Just as in the Old Testament the Aaronic benediction spoke of a multipersonal God by mentioning the Lord three times, in the New Testament the Triune Lord God revealed Himself as the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. We are the Lord's people, because He has placed His Name upon us in the waters of Holy Baptism. We are declared righteous—we wear the robes of the Christ's righteousness—because we have been born of water and the Spirit through the waters of Holy Baptism. We have been born again, literally "born from above," by the Triune Lord's work of making us His people. We are now the Triune Lord God's beloved people. Holy Baptism is a work of the Lord God. It is not our work. He is the One washing us with the waters of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost. Through water and the Spirit, we are made the people of the Triune Lord God.

We now bear His Name upon us. We remember and proclaim that Name placed upon us whenever we make the sign of the holy cross upon our foreheads. This is why it is proper to make the sign of the holy cross often. We make it when we hear the words of our Holy Baptism, the words which gave us the Name of the Lord God, and which we have proclaimed to us at the beginning of the Divine Service as a reminder that we have forgiveness because of Whose we are. We make the sign of the cross at the end of the Service, too, when we receive the blessing from the minister in the words that were given to Aaron the high priest to bless the people of Israel. When we make the sign of the holy cross, we are remembering that our Lord + Jesus suffered and died for us on the tree of the holy cross. This is into what we were baptized. We were baptized into our Lord's death. For the Son of Man was lifted up, so that all who believe on Him might have everlasting life.

Nicodemus the Pharisee, who came to the Lord + Jesus at night because He feared the other Pharisees, did not understand these things. He did not understand how a person could be born again. Could someone enter into his mother's womb a second time? Our Lord + Jesus was not speaking, however, of earthly things, but of heavenly and spiritual things. We are born of the flesh, that is, we are born in sin. We have inherited sin from our first parents, Adam and Eve. We sin daily and often. We are indeed, poor, miserable sinners, as we confessed in the Confession of Sins. This is the way we were born into this world. If we want to inherit eternal life then we must be born of water and the Spirit. We must be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For through this washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, we are born from above; we are born again not of the flesh filled with sin, but we are born of the Spirit cleansed of our sin, and clothed in the righteousness of the Christ Who suffered and died for the atonement of our sins, and the sins of the whole world.

We who have been baptized, have been gifted with faith to believe these things, and cling in faith to the promises of our Triune Lord God. He has promised to not look at our sins. He has promised to make His face shine upon us, and to lift up His countenance upon us, and give us grace and peace. We have peace from the Triune Lord God, for we know that we have been reconciled to Him. We have

peace because our soul knows that our sins can no longer harm us. We have peace because we know that our Lord has not hid His face from us, but looks upon us as His own very dear people.

In the Offertory, which we sing after the Sermon and before the General Prayer, we sing the words of King David, who had committed murder and adultery, and was deserving of the Lord God's wrath and displeasure. The Offertory is the song of repentance of King David from Psalm 51. He says the words that all repentant sinners say, "Cast me not away from Thy presence." To be cast away from the Lord's presence is the same as His hiding His face from us. When we sin, and remain in impenitence, the Lord hides His face from us in wrath and displeasure. He is embarrassed and ashamed by us when we willfully sin and remain in impenitence. He cannot stand to look at us. The sacrifices that the Triune Lord God accepts is the broken spirit and the contrite heart. He loves when we are honest with our sinful actions, and when we confess them seeking His grace and mercy.

Our Triune Lord God is slow to anger, and abundant in mercy. This is why He desires greatly to place His Name upon us and make us His people. This is why the Divine Service, the Service in which we receive the gifts of the Triune Lord God, is begun and ended with the minister blessing us with the Name of our Triune Lord God. For when we bear our Lord's Name, we are His people. When we are His people, we receive all the benefits that the Triune Lord God desires to give to His people. He desires to place His Name upon us, and declare to us that we are His people. He desires to look upon us, make His face shine upon, be gracious to us, lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace. All these things are ours because we have been born of water and the Spirit. We have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation, on account of our Triune Lord God's love and mercy toward us. Thanks be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. Amen. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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!*