

Holy Trinity Sunday

May 27, 2018

The Majesty and Wonder that is the One True God

Romans 8:14-17

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Fellow-Redeemed,

On this Trinity Sunday, the Christian church confesses that there is only one true God. Pastors will relate many facts about God's essence, and the works he does. There is no other. I'm going to do that too. But I want you to think about this first. That one true God whose being and works exist in majesty and elicit wonder is OUR God. We are united with the Father in a living and eternal relationship into which the Holy Spirit has called us because the Son took our place.

The apostle Paul wrote about this here in his letter to the Romans. The Holy Trinity is not merely some god. He is the God. He is our God. Look with me at **The Majesty and Wonder that is the One True God**. The Spirit leads us. The Father adopts us. The Son suffered for us.

All three separate and distinct persons in God's divine nature actively participate in God's saving activity. The result of that saving activity, Paul wrote, is that we are "the sons of God." "We are God's children." "We are also heirs- heirs of God, fellow heirs with Christ." This relationship is quite different from being a slave. No slave could call the master, Father. We have that right in Christ. So connected to this holy family are we that we may even use the same language Jesus spoke when he addressed his heavenly Father, "Abba." It is the same address our brother, Jesus used in Gethsemane, "Abba, everything is possible with you."

How do I know that I am in God's family? The Holy Spirit leads me into a life of sanctification. The Holy Spirit has set me apart from unbelief and placed me in the church. The Spirit testifies to my spirit that I am God's child. He testifies to this in Word and sacrament. He strengthens my faith. So when the pastor says, "You are his own dear child," I can say "Amen," this is most certainly true.

The Holy Spirit does not do his work apart from the gospel, the Word of Christ. The good news that Jesus Christ is my Savior is the means the Spirit used to bring about my adoption into God's church by creating faith in my heart. With the gospel of Christ the Spirit compels me to follow his lead. The Spirit guides me by God's commandments.

I have the privilege of a parallel experience with my two adopted children. They call me father because their mother and I brought them into our family. We have guided them. We have reassured them, testified to their spirits, that indeed they are our children if ever there comes fear or doubt. They are equal co heirs with their brother who is not adopted just as we are co heirs with Christ, who is God's one and only begotten, eternal Son,

How is such a familial relationship with the one true God even possible? To call God our God. It is possible because of the majesty and wonder that is One True God. We have seen that the Holy Spirit leads us out of unbelief into faith. Now we look and see that the Father adopts us.

Adoption means making a child not in the family by birth part of the family by choice; not the child's choice, but the parents' choice. As John describes believers in his gospel, "They were born not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God." [1:13] God the Father adopts us freely through the work of the Spirit in the word of Christ. He does so because his Father's heart goes out to us. He gave us new life since as we heard last week we were nothing but dead, dry bones spiritually.

The majesty and wonder of the one true God we see in his saving activity Jesus described to Nicodemus in our gospel, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

God sent his Son to be born, and to receive the name Jesus, because he would save us from our sins. The perfect God became perfect man for us. The Father declared Jesus' perfect obedience credited to us and our disobedience, which damns us if only once, credited to him; by that Great Exchange we and the entire world stand justified, declared not guilty, in God's sight.

Our adoption paper is redemption written in Christ's blood. The Holy Spirit signs them in the creation of faith. The Father holds it so we enjoy the forgiveness of all our sins, new spiritual life in Christ, and timeless peace and joy in the heavenly realms. The majesty and wonder of the one true God is that the Son suffered for us.

As a brother or sister of Christ, we suffer with him, “since we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified with him.” There is no cause and effect here that I earn glory as Christ did if I suffer as he did. Paul is reminding us that both suffering and glory come with the territory of being God’s children.

Jesus willingly suffered and endured temptation, injustice, physical pain, rejection and even death in order to redeem us from our lost condition. As Jesus’ brothers and sisters we can expect the same treatment from his and our enemies. If someone does not like your family and bullies your brother or sister, there is a good chance the bully will take every opportunity to do the same to you.

In the end we will share in our brother’s glory by the victory Jesus won over all the bullies who abused him. My own sinful flesh is a bully. Unbelievers are bullies. Satan is a bully. Jesus glorious victory over them is ours.

I hope you have sensed that while it might be easy to divide the saving activity of the three person of the Trinity in a creed, or in a sermon outline, it is not so easy to do practically. The great apostle combines the work of all three to take us from orphans to the children of God.

God’s works are indivisible. When you speak about the work of one, you are also speaking about the work of the other two. Our redemption and sanctification and salvation are the Trinity’s saving activity and cannot be parsed out to only one of the persons. Yet, as we will soon confess, the persons are always separate; one is never the other.

How blessed we are that the true God is not merely a god, or just someone else’s god. The Holy Trinity is OUR God. “You are his own dear child.” Amen, this is most certainly true.<SDG>