

Rev. Todd Hoeffs
HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY
Gathering the Scattered COVID YouTube message
Scripture: St. Matthew 28:16-20
June 7, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Our message for HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY, the 1st Sunday after Pentecost, is from St. Matthew's Holy Gospel chapter 28: ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This is the Gospel of our Lord.

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I must confess, I've never liked reading novels.

Other than Sherlock Holmes mysteries. The lengthy descriptive make-believe plots never captured my attention.

I always found the dialog tedious.

"Oh he did this, they exclaimed....she walked up the hill, she screamed, they said....a sudden noise....a bystander speaks, she replied.....and on and on..."

Can't wade through all of that.

Just get to the point.

Cut to the chase.

Keep it simple. Less is more, right?

Must be why I wound up reading history volumes and biographies.

Just the plain simple truth.

That captured my attention.

Facts I could remember.

People, places, dates, events.

The simple truth is all we ever want. I think?

In an era where fake news is so prevalent, its hard to trust the facts.

Now we fact-check.

We scour many sources to ensure they corroborate before we open our mouths or post things on social media.

Hopefully we actually find the truth

And not just search whatever we can to support our pre-conceived theories.

Trinity Sunday is meant to teach us the truth of God.

Trinity – Tri-une which is 3 in one.

He is ONE Almighty being,

Coming to us in 3 distinct persons:

Father,

Son [Jesus Christ]
And the Holy Spirit.

Many images and symbols are used to try and picture this for us.
Some of the better images are the 3-leaf clover (which St. Patrick used to teach this)

And 3 interconnecting circles [like these]

Or – sometimes I've used the notion that

I AM Todd

I am a husband

I am a pastor

I am a father

But I'm still Todd.

I have those 3 different characteristics

But I'm still one TODD.

Now I know this illustration doesn't always work because
I'm also a friend and cousin and uncle....etc....

But so many ways of explaining the TRINITY have limitations.

My pastor told me in Catechism class years ago –

Just trust that God says He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Done.
That's it.

That's the name into which all of us are baptized.

That relationship is part of our identity as believers in Christ.

We are enveloped into God's Kingdom

Which means the Father, Son and Spirit live and dwell inside of us.

That's so simple and so amazing!

Matters of faith are simple.

God comes to us in ways we can trust.

Water and His Word

Bread and Wine

Prayers

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs

Community of the faithful in Christ

We trust that God will come to us personally in these ways.

When Jesus sent His 11 disciples to the mount (where He'd ascend into Heaven),

They go, Jesus appears, and they worship Him. But some doubted.

This is different than Thomas' doubt

Which was more like believing but acting like he wasn't (or couldn't).

This is more wavering in your opinion.

Not sure.

Is this Jesus? Really?

He walked and talked and ate and spent 40 days with them after Easter.

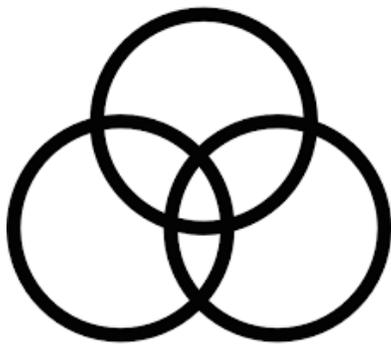
But some doubted.

I like that.

Some of the 11 doubted.

Good.

We do, too.



We waver in our opinions all the time.
The older we get the more indecisive we become.
When we're young we're so arrogant and smart and sure.
But once you begin to live enough life you know how much uncertainty exists.
Matthew doesn't record if Jesus gets into it about turning the doubt around.
No,
Just highlights His authority
Given to Him.
All authority.
Not domination.
Not dictatorship.
Not takeover.
Authority.
Which always comes with responsibility.
Such as disciplining the nations. ALL NATIONS. ALL people.
Every race, language, economic status, culture, young, old and everyone in between.
ALL
ALL means all.
No one is to be left out.
Nice thought isn't it?
Think of the news now. Besides COVID There are protests, there are others destroying,
there are cries of justice over George Floyd's death & other forms of brutality coming to
light in many places.
And even though many of us are removed from some of that in Canada,
We have our own polarizations
We have our own contradictions & history.
We have our own sinful nature which wants things so simple for us so we won't have to
think
Or feel
Or help
Or care.
Its too much.
We look at our screens so much, read so much, absorb just so much
We don't want to change our positions.
They're comfy
Pre-conceived notions are easy and we can find commonalty.
We don't want to listen or understand, because then –
I may slightly change my own position?
I may compromise
I may show learn something new...I may learn my compassion is lacking– that my mercy
has limits, that my love only covers those I know & like.
Maybe we have trouble praying about these things? Then we will grow.
But that's not our natural inclination.
We naturally want things our way at all cost and fight to protect ourselves.
Where does that leave God?
All authority and power belongs to God – given to the Son.

He is in control.
He protects us.
He looks out for us.
He holds the responsibility.
Jesus took the full weight of humanity's sin responsibility.
Jesus took it all the way to the cross.
He died bearing the brunt of our mess.
All of our mess. The worlds mess.
He rose up from the dead winning the freedom from such mess.
He lives and brings all of us a brand new start.
So even when we all make more messes, His blood still cleanses & comforts.
His authority saves us, frees us, enlivens us,
His authority shows us how wrong our preconceived sinful ways are.
His authority zeros in on our hardened hearts.
His authority chips away the parts of our lives we never want changed.
His love warms our lives and gives us the chance to grow.
To trust that we're forgiven.
To trust that His authority is enough.
That He is enough.
That we
Baptized into Him and the Father and the Spirit
IS enough.
That His LOVE for us and all people –
ALL NATIONS
Is enough.
That's plenty of authority and power.
Power centred in discipling.
Discipling through baptizing
So simple.
But today feels like a tall order with little expected success.
Not that many people are funnelling into our church buildings to be baptized.
But Jesus isn't giving that pre-requisite for baptizing.
He isn't saying we wait for the nations to funnel into our doors.
As **you go**, therefore
As you live your daily work and life in the world.
Disciple all.
As you talk to a young person getting a Slurpee in the corner store.
Disciple the nations.
As you chat with the grocery clerk
Disciple the nations.
Baptize.
As you visit a neighbour and a lonely guy looks over the fence at your friendship, trying to
feel wanted
Disciple the nations.
Bring them into the same identity and holy power and relationship you have. Father, Son,
Spirit

Build a relationship with folks which makes them want and crave the same gifts & same embrace & assurance

Part and parcel of this relationship involves teaching these baptized, disciplined nations. To keep or observe or hold onto everything Jesus commanded.

Commanded.

That military word again.

Maybe you remember from a few weeks ago?

Like links in a metal chain.

Held together as one, focused

You're connected to Jesus and so

doing what He commands comes along with your faith life.

Jesus has made it so that you long for what He longs for.

Which Matthew much earlier recorded.

Jesus' saying that the greatest commandment is:

Love God

Love neighbour as yourself.

That's what Jesus' commanded.

Not "oh, get your life in order first";

Not "but ya still need to follow the rules"

No. Love God. Love Neighbour. Love by caring about what they need.

Praying for them

Modeling how God in your life has made all the difference.

Because Jesus is with us until the end.

Our end.

Our church's end

The world's end.

Jesus is here.

In us

Next to us.

In the middle of our mess or our happiness

In our words, actions, thoughts, in our caring faces.

He's promised.

We trust that.

We've seen His grace at work.

This is the simple easy truth.

This is Jesus cutting to the chase.

This includes all nations. All.

Like Peter and John tried with dragnet fishing,

So discipling all the nations by baptism and teaching is welcoming in all

Making room for those we do not know.

Taking time to listen and understand and help

There's a young man grocery clerk at our local Safeway I've gotten to know. We usually talk a bit when he cashes out my groceries.

One time I shopped (wearing my clergy shirt) asked him how he was doing – he said – "Oh, I'm great, still livin' the dream...how 'bout you..."

I quickly responded, "that's great to hear. I'm not livin' the dream, I'm livin' God's dream...."

And before I could finish, he interrupted with "well, that's even better...."

Yes, It is.

God's dream.

God's way.

Go. Disciple. Visit. Listen. Help. Invite.

Baptize.

Teach.

Love God. Love one another.

Simple. Cut to the chase. No lengthy novel, just a clear Gospel message.

And we'll never be alone in this.

Amen.