

## The Holy Trinity.

Text: Mat 28:16-20

Suggested Hymns:

140, 142, 526, 294, 138

1) God the Father, the Creator

2) God the Son, the Redeemer

3) God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 28:16-20, <sup>16</sup> *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.* <sup>17</sup> *When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.* <sup>18</sup> *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.* <sup>19</sup> *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* <sup>20</sup> *"teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the [world]." Amen. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

On the night of His betrayal, Jesus told His disciples that after He was risen again He would go before them into Galilee. The angel in the empty tomb on Easter morning reminded the women of this appointment that Jesus had made with the disciples.

In our text we see the risen Lord appearing to His disciples on a mountain in Galilee amid the worship of some and the doubts of others. He reminds them that all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth.

As the almighty God who has unlimited power He gives them the Great Commission to disciple all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Triune God and by teaching them all things that He has commanded. He also reminds His disciples that He will be with them and with all His followers to the end of time.

Our text serves us as a continual reminder to evangelise the world. It is a real mission text and is frequently used for this purpose. The Church has

selected these words for this particular Sunday, however, because of its reference to the Holy Trinity.

Let us on this day, Trinity Sunday, fasten our attention particularly on the verse which tells us to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May a consideration of the wonderful works of the three Persons of the God-head lead us to a deeper appreciation of our wonderful and merciful God.

Everything we poor, sinful mortals are and have and hope to be we owe to the Triune God. It is God the Father who has created us; it is God the Son, our blessed Redeemer, who saved our bodies and souls from hell; and it is God the Holy Spirit who has made faith and all spiritual blessings our own. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. The Holy Trinity** **God the Father, the Creator**

To God the Father is ascribed especially the work of creation. We confess with Luther in the explanation of the First Article of the Creed: *“I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.*

*He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.*

*All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.”*

These words give expression to our faith that God is the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth. He has created the angels of the spirit world, and man, to whom He has given a body, fearfully and wonderfully made, as well as his immortal soul. It is God who has called the world into being and the vast firmament that stretches out over its sun and moon and myriads of stars.

The account of the creation of the world and of man is brought to us by the first pages of the Bible. We accept the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Therefore we reject the theory of evolution, and the millions of years associated with it.

When God created the universe, He called it into existence by the word of His power. He said, *“Let there be,”* and there was. When, however, on the sixth day of creation He made man, *“He formed him out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”* In this way the foremost of God’s visible creatures come into existence.

To man was given special attention. He was furthermore created in the image of God. When man issued forth from the creating hand of God, he had a blissful knowledge of God, and he was perfectly righteous and holy.

This divine image was lost when man fell into sin. Seth, the son of Adam and Eve, was not born in the likeness of God, in God’s image, but after the likeness and the image of his sinful parents.

God not only created this world, but He also preserves and governs it. We read in Psalm 145:15, <sup>15</sup> *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season.* This means that God holds all things in the hollow of His hand and guides and directs the destinies of nations. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His permission. The very hairs of our head are all numbered.

What a great, gracious, and merciful God and Father, to have created this world of ours in all its grandeur and with all its beauty, for people to enjoy! Surely we owe Him thanks and praise, service and obedience, for all that He has done for us in this respect.

Our song of praise reaches new heights, however, when we consider the love with which God loved His creatures who by sin had erected a barrier between God and themselves. Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about this during the night visit when He said to this master in Israel, *“God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.”* We are filled with amazement and are moved to hymns of thanksgiving when we consider this love with which God loved us poor, unworthy sinners. Without this love and the Saviour, who is the manifestation of

God's love, we would live in this beautiful world of God's creation without enjoying it, because a dreadful future after this life would be staring us in the face.

We raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving to the Father who has created and preserved us and who has loved us with an everlasting love. **2. The Holy Trinity**

### **God The Son, The Redeemer**

The Father's love to man is manifested to us in the person and work of Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Of Him we confess with Luther in his matchless explanation of the Second Article: "*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,*

*who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,*

*just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true."*

Man, created holy by God, could indeed fall into sin, but he could not rise again. He could bring the wrath of a holy God down upon himself, but he could do nothing to appease this wrath.

What man was unable to do, Jesus did for him. This is called Christ's Active obedience. He left the glories of heaven and descended into this world of misery and pain by being born a true man of the Virgin Mary. By His obedience to the will of His heavenly Father, Jesus earned for us a perfect righteousness with which we can now stand before God.

"*Which of you convicts Me of sin?*"<sup>1</sup> was a challenge that remained unanswered. Jesus fulfilled God's Law perfectly. He, to whom all things belong, cheerfully paid, even His taxes, in accordance with the command of God which included the Temple taxes and the government taxes.

Next we consider Christ's Passive Obedience. His passive obedience is Jesus suffering for us. Even though His judge, Pilate, time and again stated that he found no fault in Jesus, He was scourged, crowned with a crown of thorns, and condemned to the shameful death by crucifixion. Jesus finally died on Calvary's hill. On the third day Jesus came forth from the grave, and thus furnished us with conclusive proof that He had finished the work for which He had been sent.

Jesus' perfect obedience to the will of His Father and His substitutionary death on the cross means everything to us. He has thus redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, purchased and won us - from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil. Paradise that was lost has been regained for us. God has reconciled the world unto Himself.

Through faith in our Redeemer we have become His very own who now live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

We thank God for this and for every other revelation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is our Saviour and Redeemer. Heaven has become our own through Him. Eternity will be too short to render to Him our gratitude and praise for all that He has done for us.

Let us not wait with this song of gratitude, however, until eternity breaks in upon us. Let us rather now, here in this life, dedicate ourselves completely to Him. Let His praise always be on our lips; let us show it forth continually in our lives!

Let us confess Him before a lost world of sinners so that others, still in the slavery of sin, might find in Him the liberty of the children of God. With heart and hand and voices let us thank God for our adorable, beautiful Saviour.

### **3. The Holy Trinity**

#### **God The Holy Spirit, The Sanctifier**

All that Jesus has earned for sinful man would profit him nothing if it were not for the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, of whom we confess with Luther, *"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."*

*In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.*

*In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.*

*On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.”*

On the basis of God’s Holy Word we confess that we are by nature blind to all spiritual things, spiritually dead, and enemies of God. We read in 1 Corinthians 2:14, ***“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*** The same Apostle tells his Ephesian Christians: ***“You were dead in trespasses and sins.”***<sup>2</sup> Writing to the congregation at Rome, Paul asserts that ***“the carnal mind is enmity against God.”***<sup>3</sup> These and other statements of God in the Bible are so clear and so overwhelming as to leave no doubt about man’s inability of himself to come to faith in Jesus.

It is by, true saving faith, that Jesus and all He has done for man becomes our own. This faith is the gift of God’s Holy Spirit. He calls man by the Gospel, enlightens him with His gifts, sanctifies and keeps him in true faith.

The Holy Spirit works through means to produce faith and spiritual life in us. We call them the means of grace. They are God’s Word and the holy Sacraments. When we read God’s holy Word or hear it proclaimed to us, God’s Holy Spirit is active through this Word to bring us to faith or to keep us in faith.

When an infant, apparently pure and spotless, but a sinner because it was born of sinful parents, is brought to Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit works faith in that child, cleanses it of its inherent sin, and makes of it a child of God and an heir of heaven.

When believing adults present themselves for Holy Baptism, the same Holy Spirit is active in the Sacrament, sealing to the individuals the forgiveness of their sins and assuring them of their acceptance into God’s family.

When communicants who truly repent of their sins, believe in Jesus Christ, and are determined to wage a fight against sin, come before the Lord’s altar in Holy Communion, the Holy Spirit through this Sacrament strengthens their faith

in the forgiveness of their sins and gives them the assurance that they are reconciled children of God.

It is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity who also gives the Christian the determination to lead a holy life, a life that squares with his profession of faith and which knows and glorifies God. While it is true that perfection is never attained here in this life, the true Christian's life is one of progress and of growing in sanctification. This is made possible by the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

A life led in faith of the Son of God leads to eternal glory in heaven. On the Last Day all who by the Spirit of God were kept in faith until their end will be raised up and will have eternal life in heaven.

Let us consider these thoughts suggested by our text. You and I have been baptised in the name of this wonderful God whose works we have considered. Thus we have entered into communion with Him. By Baptism we were made His very own. Let us always treasure this Sacrament and keep in mind our Baptism.

If we have broken our covenant made with Him, we know that He has never undergone a change in His attitude toward us. Thus our Baptism is a source of comfort and consolation to us throughout our life.

In this day of doctrinal indifference let us always hold fast to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and proclaim the God who has revealed Himself to us in the Bible.

When we meet with those who speak vaguely of God, or in their prayers studiously avoid the mention of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, our blessed Redeemer, let us not fail to bear witness to the fact that all must honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not confess all three Persons of the God-head is certainly outside the pale of the Christian Church and does not worship the true God, but an idol.

Let us increase our efforts to make the true God known in a world that is hastening on to eternal ruin. Never were the opportunities for mission work more plentiful for the Church. Jesus has commanded His followers to evangelise the world. Let us heed His call, resting assured that He will be with us in our work as He promised in our text: ***“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”***

With our finite mind we cannot grasp and understand God. From the works that He has done for us and for our salvation we learn to appreciate what a wonderful, gracious God our God is. May the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and a consideration of all that God has done for us, is doing for us, and will do for us, move all of us to sing with real devotion and fervour,<sup>4</sup>

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise Him, all creatures here below;*

*Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host:*

*Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> John 8:46

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 2:1

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 8:7

<sup>4</sup> Hymn 256 v4