

## **Trinity Sunday.**

**Genesis 1; 2 Cor. 13:11-13; Matt. 28:16-20. June 11, 2017.**

Today poses us a wonderful difficult question. It is a question that takes great faith to answer in the affirmative. It is a question that keeps getting asked over and over as long as we're stubborn enough to keep answering yes. It is a question that makes us odd. It is a question that is worth staking our lives on. I'm not trying to build suspense here: the question is whether Christianity is right to claim that love is the very stuff that the world is made of. That reality itself rests on a foundation of divine love. That if you dig down to the bottom of everything, what you find is the love of God.

It's hard to say yes to this question. We might wonder how on earth we can do it without closing our eyes and stopping our ears. It sounds like an alternative fact or fake news or whatever doublethink term is in the ascendant this week. The world doesn't look like a place that is made of love. But answering yes from the deep part of our souls isn't willful Pollyanna-ism. It is dangerous, revolutionary, and faithful.

The question is especially posed today because we have this almost accidental linking of Trinity Sunday with the story of creation. It's hard to talk about the Trinity, because it's impossible to understand and we have the misapprehension that the point is to understand it. A better response might be the way we responded to the story of Creation this morning, with songs of almost nonsensical ecstatic praise. The question isn't whether we can understand it, but whether we can pray it. But what we perhaps can understand is that the simplest meaning of the Trinity is that the truest thing we can say about God is that God is loving community. Father Son and Holy Spirit are united in an eternal bond of love so intense that it spills out from among them into creation and onto us.

The technicalities of how one plus one plus one can equal one are less important than the conviction that the nature of God is a community of love. If we Christians hold that this is what God is, then the magnificent story of creation we read this morning takes on a particular shade. The story shows us God separating out beauty from beauty, calling forth each new thing. And each new thing is created into relationships of harmonious difference: land from water, birds from fish, plants from fruit trees, humans and animals. But when we read this story on Trinity Sunday, this great celebration of divine love, it's maybe a little bit easier to see an old Christian theory of how the world was made. Stick with me for a moment, because I think that this does make sense. The idea is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love each other so intensely that that love overflows, resulting in God creating the world. And indeed, all of God's actions in the world are a kind of overflow of love. Which gives us not just humans made in the image of God, but all of creation made of and for divine love. The world is made of God's overflowing love.

So, great. That's a fine fable, but if the world is made of love it sure has a funny way of showing it. We all of us feel in some way bruised by places and people where we expected to find love and did not. Christianity makes this claim not on the basis of a long hard look at the world, but on the basis of revelation. And rather than try to convince you that this is right, I want to talk about what happens if we believe this. If we believe that the world was made for competition and violence, then we have no business complaining when our souls are dulled by the grinding slow motion nihilistic violence that we see so often.

But if we believe the Christian claims about the true nature of creation, born out of the work of our loving God, then we cannot accept the way life and the world have been degraded. Hatred and violence are not “the way of the world;” they are abhorrent deviations from what the world was created to be. And we, children of the God who is love, can only be called to participate in the restoration of the world God created. This is not far from what Jesus calls us to do in the final verses of Matthew. We, with Jesus’ first friends, are sent out to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Trinitarian love, inviting them into the life of loving diversity that God intended at creation.

It’s lonely work, and so two things: first, Jesus promises to be with us. “You are going to do the impossible; and I am with you now and until the end of the age.” Jesus, who was present at creation, is present with us now and has promised to be with us always as we participate in the remaking of the world. And second, we do not do it alone. We do it with each other, and we start small. We start by trying to model our lives together here on the self-giving, inexhaustible love that unites the Trinity. It is what Paul calls the Corinthian church to do and it’s what we and all our parents in the faith have tried and not quite managed to do. Modeling our common life on the love of the Trinity means also trying to make disciples out of each other.

We do this in big obvious ways—yesterday five young Christians, all of them baptized at St. Christopher’s, were confirmed at the cathedral. I was, throughout the day, nerve-tinglingly aware of the whole host of saints here who have been a part of these people’s lives. But we also do it in small ways. We make each other disciples when we share the peace, when we pray for each other, when we ask each other for help moving chairs or washing the dishes or feeding the homeless or singing with and for each other. When we forgive each other instantly for the million tiny mistakes we’re often even unaware we’ve made.

We make each other disciples by loving each other and teaching each other how to love and be loved. And this love based disciple making work is the foundation for how the church remakes the world into what it is created to be. We do it by inviting people in to the life of God and by going out ourselves and spreading the life and love of God. We make disciples, which is only calling people back into the loving relationship with God they were created for. It’s a privilege to do this work with you. Amen.