

May 31 Worship
Reader- Gayanne Boyer

Announcements/Joys

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *“But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” Acts 7:55*

Opening Scripture- Psalm 8(page 467-468)

Opening Chorus- 70- Holy Is The Lord

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: We gather to meet with God.

People: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Leader: To give God praise.

People:And to seek God’s face.

Leader: To bring before God all our days.

People: And every part of our lives.

Leader: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, draw near to us.

People: As we draw near to you. Amen

Hymn of Praise- 106- Praise Ye The Triune God

Unison Prayer/Lord's Prayer- We gather to meet with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To be aware of your presence in our day for you, Lord, are here now; your Spirit dwells within us to bring you our worship and offer you our praise. To be conscious that you walk beside us and we do not make the journey alone. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, draw near to us as we draw near to you. We pray as Jesus taught, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

“Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end.
Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Genesis 1:26-28(page 1)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- Matthew 28:16-20(page 866)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 76- For The Beauty Of The Earth

New Testament Scripture- 2 Corinthians 13:11-14(page 1011)

Message

“One, Two, Three”

We are all familiar with the concept of the “Holy Trinity,” the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While we claim to be familiar with it, is there anyone here who actually comprehends or truly understand this uniquely Christian idea? If you do, please explain it to me. The Trinity is Christianity’s most unique, defining, incomprehensible, and awesome mystery. It is the revelation of who our Almighty Creator actually is, not just a god, but an infinite Being existing in eternity as three co-equal, infinite Persons, con-substantial yet distinct. The origin of the doctrine of the Trinity is the Bible, although the word Trinity is not used in the Bible. As all orthodox Christians agree, the doctrine of the Trinity holds that God is one essence but three Persons; God has one nature, but three centers of consciousness; God is only one What, but three Who's. Some unbelievers mistakenly call this a contradiction. Rather, the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery revealed by God in His Word. A contradiction would be to claim that God has only one nature but also three natures, or that He is only one Person but also three Persons. From the very beginning of the church, Christians have attempted to understand the mystery of the Trinity, even before they began using the term -Trinity.

Even though we will not find the word “Trinity” in the Holy Bible, all through scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, we find many references to the idea of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As I said last week referring to The Holy Spirit, In Genesis 1:2, we hear of the Spirit of God. Genesis 1:26 tells us; “Then God said, Let **US** make man in our image, after **OUR** likeness,” referring to the multiple persons of the trinity. The final verses of the book of Revelation refer to the 3 parts of the Trinity.

From the very first words of the Bible, it is evident that there is plurality with God. Even the Hebrew word used for God (*Elohim*) in Genesis 1 and throughout

much of the Hebrew Scriptures (or Old Testament) is in the plural form. Illustrating the Trinity is a noble goal, but it is ultimately an exercise in futility. Theologians through the centuries have racked their brains in a quest to formulate a doctrinally sound, fully satisfying illustration of the Triune Godhead. What stymies their efforts is the fact that God is transcendent, or beyond comprehension, and some of His qualities are unknowable. The concept of a Triune God is more than difficult to comprehend, it's impossible to comprehend, for the simple reason that we have nothing in our world that has a corresponding existence. Humans, the most complex creatures we know of, exist as single persons, not as unified multiples.

Despite the fact that nothing in our world can fully illustrate the Holy Trinity, teachers and theologians through the years have offered several analogies drawn from the realms of nature and mathematics in order to help explain that which is unexplainable. Here are a few of the illustrations:

One popular and simple illustration of the Trinity is the egg. A chicken egg consists of a shell, a yolk, and an egg white, yet it is altogether one egg. The three parts create a unified whole. The shortfall of this illustration, and others like it, is that God cannot be divided into "parts." The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one in essence, but the same cannot be said for the shell, yolk, and white of an egg.

A similar illustration uses the apple: the fruit's skin, flesh, and seeds all comprise the apple, just as the Father, Son, and Spirit all comprise God. This illustration has the same weakness as the egg illustration, namely, the parts of the apple, considered independently, are not the apple. By contrast, each Person of the Trinity, taken independently, is still God.

Another illustration is said to have originated with St. Patrick. As Patrick was evangelizing the people of ancient Ireland, he explained the concept of the Trinity by using a very common plant in Ireland: the shamrock, a member of the clover family with three small, green leaves on a single stem. One legend has it that Patrick in his travels happened upon some Irish chieftains in a meadow. The tribal leaders were puzzled about the doctrine of the Trinity, and so Patrick bent down and plucked a shamrock. The three leaves, said Patrick, are still one plant, just as the three Persons of the Trinity are one God. Another legend is similar, except that it has Patrick teaching in the province of Connaught, where he spoke to the daughters of King Laoghaire, Ethne and Fedelm. The shamrock analogy is perhaps better than the egg and apple analogies, although it shares the weakness of possibly dividing God into "parts."

Another common illustration of the Trinity involves the different states of matter (solid, liquid, and gas). The illustration typically uses water as the example: water exists as a solid (ice), a liquid, and a gas (water vapor). No matter what physical state water is in, it is still water. Its chemical composition remains the same—it is

H₂O, no matter if it's floating unseen in the atmosphere to create humidity, or floating in chunks in your tea to help relieve the humidity. The problem with this illustration is that liquid water, when it freezes, "switches" from liquid to solid, and, when it boils, it "switches" to vapor. However, God does not "switch" states or have modes. Liquid water can become solid or gas, but God the Father never becomes the Son or the Spirit. The idea that God manifests Himself differently at different times and in various contexts (like water manifests itself variously as solid, liquid, or gas) is called "modalism," and it is a heresy to be avoided. (pass out drawing)

This illustration that I have had passed out is one of the easiest ways that I have found to illustrate what the Trinity is and is not. Through this, you can see that God **IS** the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and, at the same time, the Spirit **is IS NOT** the Father, the Father **IS NOT** the Son, and the Son **IS NOT** the Holy Spirit, etc. While this illustration helps to explain the Trinity, it does not and cannot lead us to completely understand the Trinity. The Holy Trinity is something that we are not supposed to truly understand. It is a mystery beyond human comprehension. There are some things in God's planning that we are not supposed to know. If we were to know everything that God thinks, we would find ourselves not needing God, and doing things that are far beyond our ability to control.

The Trinity is something that we must take as a matter of faith. God has given us hints as to what these things mean but we have to trust that God knows what we need to live our lives as He wishes. The fact God exists in three different identities while still maintaining one existence is what we must believe because That is what God has said and we all know that God cannot and does not lie. Read the scriptures yourself and discover what God says about His three-part existence. Pray for understanding and accept what God leads you to. God would not lead us to false doctrine. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People- Great God of all creation, who are we that you are mindful of us? You who set the stars in motion, who launched waves crashing against the shore, who knows the heights and depths of the world; Why do you bother with us? You count the hairs on our heads, and call us each by name. You give us your wisdom and you uphold us by your Spirit. You tend to us and care for us, and we do not understand why. We cannot grasp your love for us, O God, for it is unlike us to be that loving and forgiving. We become enmeshed by our own needs and wants and desires and we fail to see beyond anything but our own little circles. Turn us around, O God. Help us to see as you see, and to reach out as you reach out. Remind us once again of the sacredness of our ordinary, day-to-day lives. By your Spirit, teach us to live truly as beings little lower than angels. In your mercy, O

God, forgive who we are and bless who we will be. In the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen

Closing Hymn- 61- All Creatures Of Our God And King

Benediction- May the holy wisdom of God guard your ways and guide your paths. May the living truth of God enlighten your hearts and open your minds. And may the living Spirit of God give you life, and life to the full! Go now in peace. Amen.