

The Spirit Of Truth
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
Psalm 8
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

Today is Trinity Sunday. In the Church Year, this is the day when Christians focus on the significance of the Trinity for daily living. All three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are involved in our lives. The doctrine of the Trinity is at the heart of Christian life and faith.

An old tale speaks of a man who died and faced the angel Gabriel at heaven's gates. The angel said, "Here's how this works. You need a hundred points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you have done, and I will give a certain number of points for each of them. The more good there is in the work that you cite, the more points you will get for it. When you get to a hundred points, you get in." "Okay," the man said, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart." Gabriel replied, "That's wonderful. That's worth three points." "Three points?" said the man incredulously. "Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my money and service." "Terrific!" said Gabriel, "that's certainly worth a point." "One point?" said the man with his eyes beginning to show a bit of panic. "Well, how about this: I opened a shelter for the homeless in my city and fed needy people by the hundreds during holidays." "Fantastic, that's good for two more points," said the angel. "TWO POINTS!" cried the man in desperation. "At this rate the only way I will get to heaven is by the grace of God." "Come on in," said Gabriel.¹

Grace is the antidote to a life of rules, unmet expectations, and shame. Just like the man in the fictional story who said, "At this rate the only way I will get to heaven is by the grace of God," our works, efforts and accumulated points will never be enough. It's God's unmerited favor or unconditional love for us that makes us accepted. The

¹As found on preachingtoday.com. Bryan Chapell, *Holiness By Grace* (Crossway Books, 2001), 22-23; used by permission of Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, www.crosswaybooks.org

triune God chooses, intends, and promises our acceptance.² Trust God. Obey God. There is no other way to be an effective disciple. And it is the work of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives to drive that truth home. You are chosen, accepted, and called to bank your hope on God's promises to trust, obey, and flourish as a follower of Jesus.

Proverbs 8:1-4 reads, "Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: 'To you, O people I call, and my cry is to all that live.'" God is always calling out to us to live fully in joy and wonder. Why, because God does when God sees the sun rise, hears the birds chirp, engages us in our words and deeds honoring the other in love. The Holy Spirit leads us playfully in joy and wonder.

And so, the love and grace unleashed in and through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost matters. The Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of life took up residence within every person then and subsequent generations. God loves the world. God loves you. God loves every human being. Some have yet to experience that joy and wonder. On Trinity Sunday we exclaim that the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is for us, not against us. Leanne Van Dyk writes, "Wonder and witness are twin energies in the life of faith, both born of Wisdom who rejoices daily at the side of God."³ The Bible tells us the story of Wisdom and how it [the Holy Spirit] beckons us to engage life in God's wondrous world.

Proverbs 8 reminds us that our wisdom is from God. How? Wisdom is with God

²Adapted from George R. Hunsberger in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Connections, Year C, Volume 3* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2019), 15.

³Leanne Van Dyk in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Connections, Year C, Volume 3*, 6.

daily. Wisdom communicates with God. Wisdom collaborates with God. And Wisdom rejoices with God.⁴ More on this collaborative relationship between Creator and Wisdom, Proverbs 8:22, 30-31 reads, “The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago... then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.” Wisdom is the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 8:9 reads, “O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth.” This verse clearly affirms that we are to worship God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, with joy and delight, because God views each follower of Jesus as precious.

Romans 5 shows us how this ever fluid and interactive relationship helps us get unstuck from pinning hope to the imaginable and utilizing hope to unpack the unimaginable. What is the unimaginable? The actual fulfillment of God’s intentions and promises. Romans 5:3-5 reads, “... We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” In this regard, George R. Hunsberger writes, “... the Lord’s Supper is a feast of remembrance, and of communion and of hope. The first two have the tendency to predominate in our imagination of the Supper. How might that change if we accented the dimension of hope?”⁵ And the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, bears witness to the power of hope in a person’s life for daily living in a very complicated world.

⁴Adapted from Leanne Van Dyk in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Connections, Year C, Volume 3*, 5-6.

⁵George R. Hunsberger in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Connections, Year C, Volume 3*, 12.

John 16 articulates the relational dynamic within the Godhead. And the Godhead, with us, benefits us as we navigate the highs and lows of everyday life. John 16:13-14 reads, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” The Holy Spirit is constantly at work in every Christian’s life to engage that person in loving God, loving others, living the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 25, and making disciples. That is the truth.⁶

The Triune God is an active agent in your life and the world. Loving God, loving others, living the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 25, and making disciples moves you from imagining transformation to experiencing it. Then you see the gospel come to reality. Trust and obey the Spirit of truth for the Holy Spirit leads you to remember, tell, and live the way of Jesus by being just, kind, and humble. Amen.

*This sermon was preached (for the In-Person, Online, and Village TV 6 congregations)
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⁶ In the paragraphs of biblical interpretation above, I am grateful for the thinking and writing of Cameron B. R. Howard, Leanne Van Dyk, Eunjoo Mary Kim, David Schnasa Jacobsen, George R. Hunsberger, David Schnasa Jacobsen, and George R. Hunsberger in Joel B. Green, Thomas G. Long, Luke A. Powery and Cynthia L. Rigby, editors, *Connections, Year C, Volume 3*, 2-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-16.