

Matthew 28:16-20 Genesis 1:1- 2:4 Psalm 8 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Wholy God

Today is Trinity Sunday, so we're going to spend some time together examining what that may mean. Hopefully revealing the Trinity in our lives every single day. Perhaps this is a reminder for some whose lives have just gotten busy, or perhaps this is a new and wondrous exploration of God in Three Persons ... blessed Trinity.

"God"; we use that word in our lives quite a bit; in songs, in crisis, in gratitude. This 'God'... the God of Scripture is not some solitary figure floating above the clouds, watching from a distance. From Genesis to Paul's final letters, God shows up as relationship; as community. The words describing this trinity are referred to in a few different ways. I have heard "Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier"; "Mind, Idea and Expression"; "Mother, Child, Breath of God". Today, I will offer Father, Son and Holy Spirit because that's what this particular Scripture uses. But, please exchange as you are comfortable ... perhaps you will create a new description!

Father, Son, Holy Spirit; so united in love they are one, and yet distinct enough that each one shows us something different about what love actually looks like. We're going to walk through that today. Not as a theology lecture, I promise. More like a love story. About a God who made us, walks with us, and moves ahead of us and for us into every room we'll ever enter.

Here's why this matters right now: many of us are carrying real questions, real wounds, real weariness. We don't need a distant deity with a rulebook. We need a God who is actually present. Who knows what this complicated life is like. Who is even closer to our experience than we may have been led to believe.

That's what I want to introduce or perhaps reintroduce, to us today. My order today is Father, the Spirit and finally Son

1. **The Father (Creator, Mind, Mother)— The One Who Made Us on Purpose**

Let's start where everything starts. Genesis 1. The very first page of Scripture.

Before God speaks a single word of creation, notice what's already there: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."*

Right there in the opening lines; the Father creating, the Spirit hovering, and the Son already present in the creative Word. The Trinity isn't a doctrine invented by committees centuries later. It's in the first breath of the Bible.

For our many learned theologians, I'm not trying to join the argument that the Israelites who wrote Genesis were or were not trinitarian. They certainly didn't call it that. I'm just saying that the inspiration for what we have come to understand as THE TRINITY, was right there in Genesis.

I want to linger on that Spirit hovering and not jump ahead too quickly. The earth is dark. Formless. Empty. And what does the Spirit do? Panic? Leave? No, just hovers. Present in the chaos. Moving over the void with something I have chosen to call patient, expectant love.

We know what a formless, empty void feels like ... personally. How about Sunday night when tomorrow is MONDAY again. Monday where the week looms and, for so many reasons, we don't want to face it. And the first thing the scripture wants us to know is that God does not wait for the chaos to clear before showing up.

Then out of that hovering presence, the Father speaks everything into being. And at the end of it: a person. And what God says about that person changes everything, *"God created mankind in their own image, in the image of God, God created them."*

The *imago Dei*. We are not accidents. We are deliberate acts of a God who wanted us here.

Libby Roderick is a songwriter who wrote words that brought me back to Christianity when I'd almost given up on it entirely. She wrote, *"How could anyone ever tell you you were anything less than beautiful? How could anyone ever tell you you were less than whole?"* I heard for the first time that I was a child of God - perfect, exactly as I was made, and I was filled with light ... and considerable tears, I can admit.

Psalms 8 puts it this way: when the poet looks up at the stars, this staggering canopy of light, he asks "what are human beings that you even notice us?" And the answer is stunning, *"You crowned them with glory and honor"*. Not earned. Not awarded for spiritual performance. Given — freely, permanently — by the One who spoke the stars into existence.

We don't have to earn the image of God. We already bear it. Our doubts don't strip it away. The Creator who hovered over chaos is not startled by our questions.

For those of us here today who have struggled, who have spent time pulling our faith apart - asking the hard questions, sitting in the uncertainty, wondering whether any of it holds - your wrestling does not remove the crown. *You* who have come to know that truth is bigger and wider than any one tradition can fully contain, this creation account is yours too. The Father of Genesis 1 is not a God for one people or one culture. This is the Creator of everything, claiming everyone, from the very first word.

Often called the Father; God, the one who made us, on purpose, in love.

2: The Spirit - (Sanctifier, Expression, Breath of God) The One Who Heals What Is Broken

We live in an extraordinary time. More freedom to define our own lives than almost any era in history; our path, our convictions, our community, our meaning. That is genuinely good. And life, being life, almost always comes with an "and at the same time..." And at the same time — that freedom can leave us strangely untethered. When we are the authors of our own stories, we carry every chapter alone. And some chapters are very heavy to hold by ourselves.

We know what this is like. We can have hundreds of connections and still feel profoundly unknown. We can be professionally together and privately fraying. We can have built something real and beautiful and still lie awake in the darkness of the night wondering whether it means what we hoped it would mean.

There's nothing wrong with us if we feel that. These are very human feelings.

And, here's what we need to know: the Spirit that hovered over the void in Genesis didn't retire after creation. That same Spirit is described all through Scripture as the one that moves into broken places; that breathes life into dry bones, that intercedes for us when we don't even have words (Romans 8:26). Deeply, intimately present in the mess.

Paul was writing to a genuinely fractured church in Corinth; real wounds, real grievances, people who had hurt each other in ways that left marks. After all the hard truth-telling, he closes with this: *"Strive for full restoration... the God of love and peace will be with you."*

That Greek word for "restoration" ... **kah-tar-TID-zes-the** ... is a medical term. It means to set a broken bone. To mend a torn net. Not to pretend the break didn't happen. Not to rush past the damage. To be made whole and functional again.

And here's the thing about a mended bone: it's stronger at the fracture site than before it was broken. The healing isn't the erasure of the wound. It's the discovery that the wound doesn't get the final word and wounds survived make us stronger, like that bone.

We have this amazing benediction, a 'sending' that has been spoken over God's people for two thousand years — and I want us to hear it today not as liturgy, but as a description of what the Trinity actually offers:

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." — 2 Corinthians 13:14

We have talked about the love of God - the Father, that made us on purpose and called us good. The fellowship of the Holy Spirit - the Hoverer, the Healer, that shows up in the void and refuses to leave. We finish up with the grace of Jesus Christ - the Son, who meets us where we are, even in the mess.

3: The Son (Redeemer, Idea, Child) - The One Who Goes With Us

Matthew 28. A hillside in Galilee. Eleven disciples. And the text tells us something beautifully honest: when they saw the risen Jesus, they worshipped him — *and some of them doubted*.

Worship and doubt. Same sentence. Same hillside. Same people.

We should sit with that for a moment. Because that is us on a good Sunday. That is us in the honest privacy of our own hearts. The worship is real, and so is the wondering. Matthew could have left the doubt part out. He didn't. Which means the commission that follows isn't given to the certain. It's given to the whole complicated, worshipping-and-wondering lot of them. People just like us.

And here's what Jesus says to those doubting, worshipping people:

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Great Commission is itself Trinitarian. Go in the name of the Father - that made every person in his image. The Son — who walked among us, wept with us, rose for us. The Holy Spirit - that hovered over the void and now hovers over every broken life. The God who sends us sends us with the fullness of what God is. We do not go alone.

Now go ... "Make disciples" - we sometimes load those words with things they were never meant to carry. The Greek **math-ayt-YOO-sayt** is relational at its core. To walk alongside. Learn together. Invite someone into a way of being in the world. It doesn't mean argue people into agreement or apply pressure until someone capitulates.

Jesus himself didn't work that way. The rich young ruler walked away. Jesus watched him go and loved him still. The woman at the well had a complicated history and some unresolved theology, and Jesus sat down and had a real conversation with her. Zacchaeus was up a tree specifically trying not to be noticed, and Jesus stopped underneath him and said, warmly, "*Come down. I'm coming to your house today.*"

The Son of God made disciples by showing up, sitting down, and staying. Bob invited us a couple of weeks ago to realize the necessity to STAY. That is still the method. And it is available to us, exactly as we are.

Because here's the thing we need to hear. This commission was given to people who were still healing. Still doubting. Still processing the most disorienting week of their lives. Which means it belongs to us too; right here, right now, in whatever state we've arrived this morning.

And now - having said all of that - let me speak to *you* directly.

You ... the one who spent years in the wilderness of honest questioning, who pulled your inherited faith apart, sat in the uncertainty and came out the other side with a wider and more truthful theology. *You* are now the safest person in the room for someone just beginning to ask those same questions. The Spirit uses your deconstruction as a doorway. Your struggle is a gift you may not have planned to give.

You ... the one in recovery from whatever addiction grasped you, who sits with someone in their first week, not because you have it sorted out, but because you know the road. Your still-healing life, held together by grace, is the most convincing argument for grace that anyone could make.

You ... the one who simply shows up; who asks "how are you really" and actually waits for the answer, the one who brings the meal over in the hard week, who sends the message at 11 p.m. that just says *I was thinking about you*. You are making the fellowship of the Holy Spirit visible. Don't underestimate that.

You the one whose love has grown wide enough to hold people that your tradition once kept at a distance. The world is not hungry for that as an idea. It is hungry for it as a *presence*. As a life. As *you*.

Closing: Wholy God

How can we sum this up? Grace. Love. Fellowship. Three gifts. All for us. All real. Gifts from the God who goes with us.

That is the true nature of reality, backed by the same God that was present in the chaos before the first morning ever broke.

We started in the formless dark, with the Spirit hovering, the Father about to speak, the Son already present. And the first thing we heard was that we are made in God's image. Crowned. On purpose. By a God that is community, that made us for community, and that was never going to leave us in the dark.

We walked through the honest ache of being human right now, and found a Spirit that moves into broken places and makes mended bones stronger at the break.

And we stood on a hillside with eleven worshipping, doubting, beautiful human beings and heard the Son say: *Go. I am with you. Always.*

Not just on the good days. Not just when we have it figured out. The Father that crowned us; the Spirit that hovered over our chaos before we knew to ask; the Son who walked into the room where the doubters were and commissioned them anyway.

All three. All the time. For all of us.

Here's the invitation - and I truly mean *invitation*, because our God let people walk away and still came looking for us. God does not demand; does not pressure. God's way is a hand extended across a table set for everyone.

So, go ...

We go, not because we are healed, but because we are *being* healed, and healing is contagious. We go - not because we've resolved every question, but because we've sat in them long enough to know they're worth sitting in. We go as we are. The wondering and the worshipping. The doubt and the devotion. The wounds and the crown.

And somewhere out there, someone is sitting in the dark right now — formless, empty, not sure anything is hovering over their particular void.

You know that dark. *You* have waited in it for the light. And so *you* get to be the one who goes to that hurting person to say, "*Something is there. I know because it found me in the dark.*"

Go. Carry the whole God with you.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

HYMN OF RESPONSE

#626 *Lord of all power*