

Our Triune God Brings Blessings

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Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. ¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (2 Corinthians 13:11-13)

1. What is Love?

What is the most important word in the Bible? Words like salvation, forgiveness, grace, cross, kingdom of God, resurrection, and eternal life might be the words that come to mind. Which word speaks to you the most? The Bible tells us that the most important word in the Bible is the word, “love.” In the New International Version of the Bible, the word “love” appears 551 times. Love is a word that we want to hear from others.

How do we define “love?” Would you share your definition of love in the chat box? For me, love goes beyond our ability to describe the word. Especially God’s love is a mystery for me. This morning, we will talk about another important mystery. That mystery is God himself.

2. Trinity

Last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost Sunday. Today is **Trinity Sunday**. The word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible. However, the church has been celebrating the Trinity since the earliest days of the church. The trinitarian expression was included in the baptism, prayers, hymns, and the creeds of the earliest church.

What is the Trinity? The Trinity means that God is one in essence, subsisting in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit from all eternity. All three persons of the Trinity share the same divine attributes. Each has a unique task to perform: God the Father sent Jesus the Son: God the Son died on the cross; the Father and the Son sent God the Holy Spirit to dwell in every believer. Numerous passages of the Bible refer to all three persons in one God.

Although the trinity appears throughout the Bible, it is difficult to explain and understand. That’s why some Christians reject the concept of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity has been a controversy throughout Christian history and continues today. Why is the Trinity so important for those who believe in the triune God? In the early church, Christians asked whether Jesus was human, divine, or both. When we talk about the Holy Spirit, the same question comes up, was the Holy Spirit divine or not?

Today's scripture, 2 Corinthians 13:13, is one of the references to the Trinity. "***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.***" At the end of his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul invokes the blessing of the Triune God. Paul talks about the triune God to the Corinthians even before the doctrine of the Trinity had been fully articulated. Paul probably did not have any intention to develop a kind of doctrine. However, he seemed to experience an extraordinary wisdom and power of the Triune God to talk about it with the Corinthians.

In the passage, Paul says "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." What does Paul mean by this phrase? *Charis* is the Greek word for grace. The meaning of *charis* is a gift, kindness, and generosity. The grace of Jesus in this passage means the gift of salvation through the forgiveness of sins. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8, "***by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.***"

What does "the love of God" mean in this passage? Paul talks about *Agape* love, which is unselfish love that focuses on the needs of the other person rather than one's own needs. The love of God is unconditional and covenantal love that can't be broken.

To keep his promise of salvation God sent Jesus to this world. That is why John 3:16 tells us about God's love. "***God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.***"

What does the phrase "the communion of the Holy Spirit" mean? Communion in Greek is *koinonia*, which means fellowship, sharing, and support. Jesus says to his disciples in John 16:13 about the Holy Spirit. "***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.***" Jesus is saying that when the Holy Spirit comes, the Holy Spirit would connect us in an intimate relationship with God and helps us to know what the will of God is.

3. The Corinthians and Triune God's Blessings

Paul invokes the blessings of the triune God at the end of his letter to the Corinthians. Why did Paul write his letters to them? Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "***Now I appeal to you... that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.***"

In his second letter, Paul says, "***Finally listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you***" (2 Corinthians 13:11). In his two letters, Paul expresses the same

wish. He wants them to have unity and peace. The Corinthian church was a community torn by division. Paul prays that the Corinthian community would be united and live in peace. His prayer for the community seems very relevant to us and our country today. The Corinthian church was multicultural and multiracial congregation. The church had different races, different social backgrounds, languages and cultures as we have in the United States.

4. Peace with Justice Sunday

The past week has been blanketed by the pain and sadness stemming from the social issues of racism and injustice in our society. Protests have erupted throughout the country and across the globe. What would Paul say to us? He would say the same thing that he had told to the Corinthians. Have you ever thought about what our Lord would say about our current situation? Our Lord would want us to bring justice and peace in our society.

Jesus says to his disciples in Luke 4:18, “***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.***” Jesus was sent to take care of those who had been marginalized. If we apply this word to our situation, Jesus was sent to the victims of racism and injustice. Jesus would want us to do the same as Jesus had done.

Today is not only Trinity Sunday but also **Peace with Justice Sunday**. United Methodist Social Principles 165 C says, “As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. We must insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them.” Although we are called to seek justice, we are also called to be reconcilers of conflict. Jesus says to his disciples in Matthew 5:9, “***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.***” We are called to be the peacemakers.

5. Conclusion

Today, we focus on God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Trinity is difficult to understand. It would remain as a mystery in this life. Yet we stand in awe and amazement that God remains throughout history and forever as our loving heavenly Father who made us, saved us, looks after us, and provides and protects us. Our triune God brings us many blessings and wants us to be blessings to bless others bringing justice and peace in our society.

6. Application

This Wednesday my daughter and I are going to visit my grandson in San Francisco. You can imagine how much I am excited about my trip. When I think of my grandson, I realize that his birth is a mystery. Although Caleb was born through his parents, his race, gender, DNA, personality, and many other things are determined by the creator God. After the baby was born, three persons, my son, his wife and Christine take care of him for 24 hours a day.

Just like an infant child, God created you and me and takes care of us for 24 hours a day since we were born. As we are happy with our children and grandchildren, God would be so happy when we live in peace.

God sent Jesus to save us and sent the Holy Spirit to help us keep an intimate relationship with the Lord. While I was preparing today's message, I learned that the doctrine of the Trinity teaches us God's full commitment, devotion, and dedication to His people. As we celebrate Trinity Sunday and peace with justice Sunday, we praise the mystery of the Trinity, and give thanks to God for creating, redeeming, and sustaining us and for giving us a mission to bring justice and peace in the world. Amen.