

Sermon for Trinity Sunday preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, June 4, 2023.

Trinity Sunday. Three in One Sunday. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit Sunday. Hymn 362 Sunday – Holy, holy, holy.

So many entry points for today's sermon. Where to start? Perhaps one of the seven days.

Day 1 - day and night

Day 2 - land, water and sky

Day 3 - vegetation

Day 4 - sun and moon

Day 5 - sea and air

Day 6 - male and female

Day 7 - take a break

If you were preaching today, where would you start? What would be your entry point? Would it be the whole week, or just one of the seven days, and, if just one, which one?

Or, if you were God, might you have an entirely different approach than just Day 1 or just Day 7?

It's all a moot point, isn't it? We are not God. We are not the Creator. If we can believe Scripture, what we are is a helper. Someone to assist in caring for the Creation. A very special helper, to be sure, but a helper nonetheless. Not the Creator. A helper.

So, let's ask the question again. If we are a helper, whom or what are we supposed to help?

I think it is safe to say that we are supposed to help those who need help. But there's more to the answer, isn't there? And that is that we are supposed to help those whom we can help.

And the key here is not to underestimate our ability to make a positive difference in the life of others. We might not have medical training, but we can help heal. We might not be physically strong, but we can make tough decisions.

For every help that we cannot provide, there is help that we can provide. Sometimes the greatest help is a quiet presence in the midst of fear or uncertainty.

Yes, a calmness. An attitude that takes things down a notch. A step back for the purpose of considering next steps. From the abyss, in other words.

And, what day of the week might that be? Sunday. Day 7. A day of rest, not from responsibility, but from frenzy. A day of consideration in terms of what comes next and just how we might fit into that picture.

Can you even imagine a week without Sunday? Can you imagine non-stop action that saps energy and creativity and insight? That kind of 24-7 engagement is what characterizes much of our lives. Can we imagine it? Of course, we can. Often we're a part of it. And, when we are a part of the frenzy, we add to the frenzy, and further complicate a situation that needs some rest.

With some irony, today's Gospel suggests that there is important work to do. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, including baptizing and teaching."

Is the message here "Stay busy"? Or, is the message perhaps "If you must be busy, at least take me with you." It's the latter, isn't it?

If we were in God's presence, we would be busy-beavers, wouldn't we? But we would also take a break from time to time. We would need to refuel. We would need to re-energize.

Jesus himself took breaks. Jesus did what you and I are doing right now. We know we need energy. And we know where to find that energy. With one another, at table, with the Lord. And, what was the Lord's message at that table? "Live in peace."

Not “stop working.” But “live in peace.” A version perhaps of “whistle while you work.”

Whatever our training, whatever our desires, whatever our particular contribution might be to “living in peace,” we should remember that this attitude, this approach to life, this application of whatever gifts or talents we have been given or developed, is what we are meant to show forth. We are meant to model hope and joy and thanksgiving. We are intended to be beacons of light. We have a purpose, not self-invented, but implanted by God.

We are special, special creatures, created in the image of God.

That identity alone ought to motivate us to be the best people that we can be. The best parents, the best children, the best neighbors, the best citizens, the best examples of using our particular gifts and talents.

We don't want to duplicate effort. We want to add effort. We have something worthwhile to contribute. Something that no one else can contribute. Why? Because it comes from us.

We are for a reason. Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose from the dead, for a reason. And that reason was simply to help us contribute to the welfare of the world in manner commensurate with our gifts and talents. And each of us has those gifts and talents. No excuses. Share them.

So, pick your day - Sunday through Saturday, Day 1 through Day 7 – and then review your special gifts. And then deliver them in ways that bring joy and help to others. That possibility, that combination, that opportunity exists. Not always easy to recognize, apply, and share. But well worth the journey, for self and others. Yes, let's keep the Creation moving in a positive direction, just as God intended.

It's a new **Day**, after all.

Amen.

Service of Holy Communion for Trinity Sunday, June 4, 2023

Hymn 362 – Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and every more shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
Though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Page 355

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the father. Amen.*

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Let us pray.

Trinity Sunday Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory; O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *.Amen.*

First Reading – Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Psalm 8

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Hymn 321 – *My God, thy table now is spread*

My God, thy table now is spread, thy cup with love doth overflow;
be all thy children thither led, and let them thy sweet mercies know.

O let thy table honored be, and furnished well with joyful guests;
and may each soul salvation see, that here its sacred pledges tastes.

Drawn by thy quickening grace, O Lord, in countless numbers let them come
and gather from their Father's board the Bread that lives beyond the tomb.

Nor let thy spreading gospel rest till through the world thy truth has run,
till with this Bread shall all be blessed who see the light or feel the sun.

Gospel – Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon

The Rev. Charles Rowins

Nicene Creed – page 358

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again In accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father,
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen*

Prayers of the People Form IV – page 388

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy. *Hear our prayer.*

Confession and Absolution – page 360

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.*

*We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The Peace – page 360

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Announcements

Offertory Sentence

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and give himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

Doxology - Hymn 380, verse 4

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer – page 361

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise, you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Holy, holy holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Breaking of the Bread

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion

Post Communion Prayer

*Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us
as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
And you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.*

Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 411 – O bless the Lord, my soul! – stanzas 1-5

O bless the Lord, my soul! His grace to thee proclaim!
And all that is within me join to bless his holy Name!

O bless the Lord, my soul! His mercies bear in mind!
Forget not all his benefits! The Lord to thee is kind.

He will not always chide; he will with patience wait;
his wrath is ever slow to rise and ready to abate.

He pardons all thy sins, prolongs thy feeble breath;
he healeth thine infirmities and ransoms thee from death.

He clothes thee with his love, upholds thee with his truth;
and like the eagle he renews the vigor of thy youth.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Lessons for Trinity Sunday – June 4, 2023

Collect: Almighty and everlasting god, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of our divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the **first day**.

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the **second day**.

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: Plants yielding seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the **third day**.

And God said, “Let there be light in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the

lesser light to rule the night- and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the **fourth day**.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the **fifth day**.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make human-kind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has breath of life I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, the **sixth day**.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the **seventh day** God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done

in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 8

O Lord our Governor,
how exalted in your Name in all the world!
Out of the mouths of infants and children
your majesty is praised above the heavens.
You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries,
to quell the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
What is man that you should be mindful of him?
the son of man that you should seek him out?
You have made him but little lower than the angels;
you adorn him with glory and honor;
You give him mastery over the works of your hands;
you put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
even the wild beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, the fish of the seas,
and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.
O Lord our Governor,
how exalted in your Name in all the world!

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

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. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*