

“God’s (Pre)Occupation” – Pr Jim Sprenkle – Trinity Sunday May 31, 2026

- I. **Matthew 28:16-20** – previously read
- II. **Last year, the Church celebrated 1700 years** since the writing of the Nicene Creed – 325 AD to 2025 AD.
 - a. Now, some of you might be wondering what the Nicene Creed is... but stay with me and you will know more by the end of this message.
 - b. First of all, the creeds are just statements of what we believe about God’s work in creation and for us humans throughout all history... it’s a summary of God’s love for us.
 - i. We often say the Apostles’ Creed, which is the shorter version, and sometimes we say the Nicene Creed which has a little more detail... then on Trinity Sunday, we say the Athanasian Creed – which goes into the greatest detail of all.
 - ii. But why do we say these things over and over... isn’t it overkill to say what we believe about God every service?
 1. No, it’s not overkill because we often get God wrong, and these words are a consistent focus on the right teaching about who God is and how much He does for us.
 - c. As we go back to the writing of the Nicene Creed 1700 years ago, the Christian Church was having all kinds of problems with teachings about God – and there was real division.
 - i. Now, this wasn’t division like, “what color will our carpet be?” or, “what kind of wine will we serve at communion?” or, “what kind of music will we have during worship?”
 - ii. This division was focused on the very nature of God... the nature of Jesus Christ.
 - iii. You see, some people believed that Jesus was a created being... made by God the Father before time began... while others believed that Jesus is God... He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and not created.
 - iv. I guess there were riots breaking out over this issue, and Roman Empire and its Emperor Constantine were dealing with fights between each side.
 - v. Bishops who believed in Jesus as God were dismissed and replaced by those who believed that Jesus was a created being.
 - vi. So, Constantine called for a gathering in the city of Nicaea, and over 300 bishops prayerfully considered things like the nature of Christ, and whether He was both human and divine.
 - vii. In the end, they came up with a creed that we know as the Nicene Creed... a statement and summary of Christian faith that defines God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... or three Persons in One Godhead.

viii. The blessing was they used the Scriptures to come to the conclusion that Jesus was not a created being, but was “begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father.”

1. In other words, Jesus was not created, He was God from eternity... and even of the same substance.

ix. And the point of all this is to say that we still faithfully state these words that were used to clarify and teach the right things about God 1700 years later... and we know that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit... One God, three persons... or what we call “the Trinity.”

d. I read a couple of different stories about non-denominational churches deciding to read the Nicene Creed in their worship services on a weekly basis – which is almost unheard of in those churches.

i. The pastors began to see a change in their members’ understanding about who God is, and they learned the basic teachings and principles of the Holy Christian Church that has been taught for centuries.

ii. You all have the blessing of a very good church body when it comes to teaching, and I want people to understand and speak clearly about the God who saves us.

iii. In the end, those churches that began professing the Nicene Creed each week grew in depth of knowledge... but more than that, they were able to share their faith and defend it better.

III. **The question of Jesus is still raging all around us.**

a. I know this is Trinity Sunday, so I should be giving equal time to the Father and the Holy Spirit, right? But there are constant misunderstandings and false teachings going on about Jesus to this day.

i. For example, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe Jesus is God... they believe Jesus is a created being who was Michael the Archangel before becoming a man.

ii. Beyond that, many Christians cannot clearly state that Jesus is God and has two natures – divine and human.

iii. Social media becomes the teacher for many people rather than going to a church with good teaching... and if you didn’t know this already, some people might mislead you on these platforms... 😊

b. The point of today is to support our understanding of our One True God, and that means that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One God... they are co-equal... co-eternal... co-almighty... and the list goes on because we know Deuteronomy 6:4 is true... “The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

c. However, I always say this on Trinity Sunday too... that we may never fully comprehend the mystery of God and who He is, but we certainly can know and trust that He loves us and cares for us.

IV. **Jesus shares the Great Commission** with His followers in our Gospel today.

- a. He rose from the dead more than a month prior, and it is almost time for Him to ascend to heaven in power.
- b. He tells His followers to make disciples (more followers) of all the people in the world... by baptizing them in the name of God... Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... and then teaching them His commands.
- c. The amazing blessing behind this mandate is that Jesus wants the revelation... God to be revealed... to all people so they can be rescued from sin and death.
- d. The Father sends the Son... the Son accomplishes salvation... then the Father and the Son send the Spirit... and then the Spirit brings us to Christ.... and through Christ, we are brought to the Father.
 - i. Do you see how the entire work of our salvation is accomplished by the Triune God from beginning to end.
 - ii. You see, we should not look at the Holy Trinity as some kind of science project to figure out, but more than that, we should praise Him for what He does.
 - iii. God is occupied with all kinds of things that bless His creation – including our daily bread and all our needs... and He also keeps things going so that we can keep sharing His message of salvation.
 - iv. Here's the thing, if God is occupied with all these blessings for us... He is preoccupied with those who are lost.
 - v. God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim 2:3-4) – His preoccupation is the lost and how we might make them disciples by baptizing in His holy name and teach them.

- V. **We confidently** state our beliefs about God through the creeds of the Church.
 - a. These keep us walking in the right path as we are reminded again and again who God is and the summary of His work for us throughout all history.
 - b. We are not divided, we are confident in our trust that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit... and the God who is seeking the lost to save them.
 - c. I appreciate that our church teaches the Scriptures in depth and helps us to know God and how to talk about Him with others.
 - i. However, God's work is what matters most.
 - ii. He is at work in the most simple discussions about Jesus as the Savior... the one who died on the cross for us... rose again to bring us forgiveness and life... and who moved from an eternal God in the heavenly realms to a human being in our midst.
 - iii. God has come to dwell among us in Jesus, and that is the most humble, wonderful, and powerful showing of His glory... The God of the universe became one of us.

- d. So, in all the talk about creeds and substance and begotten and godhead... just remember the basic truth that God decided to save you... little old you... and He has always had a desire to call you to Himself.
- e. As we go from here with a head full of knowledge... prepare your hearts as well... the Lord Jesus calls us to go and make disciples... to witness about His love... and to also have a preoccupation with the lost. Amen.