

“I Am” – Pr Jim Sprenkle – Trinity Sunday – June 12, 2022

- I. **John 8:58-59** – ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.
- II. **Trinity Sunday calls us to think about the mysteries of God.**
 - a. As I often mention, the Church year is about six months of Advent through Pentecost (December through May) and then the six months following or after Pentecost.
 - i. The importance of the season after Pentecost is green – because it represents growing... growing up as a Christian.
 - ii. Our God is not just a mysterious entity who is far off and out of touch, but a God of presence... and He works in our lives now.
 - iii. So it is interesting that we kick off the season of God’s amazing presence and power in our lives with a Sunday that has many people scratching their heads...
 1. What is the Trinity?
 2. How can God be three in One?
 3. How does this help or encourage me and my faith?
 - b. I suppose it wouldn’t be very helpful to the average married man if he couldn’t describe what and who his wife is.
 - i. He should be able to say that she is a human being, a female, maybe some family history and nationality, perhaps she is a mother...
 - ii. Then we get into some more difficult descriptions – maybe one could even say mysteries...
 1. I love her – although I can’t really describe love
 2. I chose her – although I can’t fully explain attraction
 3. She is a life partner who helps me in my areas of weakness – but I don’t understand exactly how
 4. She is very complex and I am not always sure how to pick up on cues when she wants something...
 - a. Like sometimes the garbage is sitting in the middle of the floor, or on my chair
 - b. Or my dishes are piled up in the sink in such a way that I cannot get a glass of water without knocking over the tower that is precariously balanced...
 - c. Okay that was a bit much, but you get the idea – communication can be direct sometimes, or a bit of a mystery.
 - iii. And yet, for all the mystery, I know what my wife does in my life – I know that she is active and constantly supporting me in mind, body, and spirit.

- c. Trinity Sunday may not answer all the questions about God, but we can and should be able to describe the basics.
 - i. We should also be able to identify and give thanks for the many ways God is active in our lives – supporting us in mind, body, and spirit.

III. **God is the Father, God is the Son, and God is the Holy Spirit.**

- a. We see many ways God the Father is at work to rescue and save His people... from the very beginning the Bible, all the way to the end
 - i. He is also known as Yahweh, or “I Am” – which is the name He tells Moses from the burning bush in Exodus 3.
 - ii. The Father never abandoned us – and always sought us out
- b. God the Son was sent by the Father to carry out the rescue mission for our eternal lives... as the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)
 - i. Jesus came as both God in His divine nature... and as man in His human nature – 100% God and 100% man
 - ii. Of course in today’s Gospel reading, Jesus actually uses the words that God called Himself at the burning bush – Jesus doesn’t say, “Before Abraham was, I was...” no, He says, “Before Abraham was, I am.”
 - 1. This blatantly and obviously tells the Jews arguing with Jesus that He is God – and their response? Stone Him!!
 - iii. Yet we see that Jesus was there long before He became man... as Paul writes in Colossians 1:16-17, “For by [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”
- c. And finally, God the Holy Spirit is also sent by the Father and the Son to bring us faith and help us to know Jesus as our Savior.
 - i. Last week at Pentecost we talked about the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples in power... which was the beginning of the Church.
 - ii. And lest we think the Holy Spirit is not God, in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, Peter asks Ananias why he lied to the Holy Spirit, and then in the following verse, “you have not lied to man, but to God.” (Acts 5:3-4).
- d. So what are we to do with all this truth?
 - i. God is Father, God is Son, God is the Holy Spirit
 - ii. God works in perfect harmony in the separate Persons of the Trinity
 - iii. We must get the basics about who God is, in order that:
 - 1. We worship who we know
 - 2. We are not led astray by the world and its understandings about God
 - 3. We see all that He is, but more, all that He does

e. God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit has made us a part of His plan of salvation.

IV. **Key and central to that saving mission is Jesus Christ, the Son.**

a. That's why we make such a big deal out of Jesus all the time – He is the chosen way that God would work in our lives to save us.

b. In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus stands before the Jewish leaders and tells them He... is... God.

i. I know you hear this each Sunday from the pulpit, but stop for just a moment and take in what He said... it's shocking... it's outlandish... and if anyone said it in our midst today we would instantly write them off as having a mental crisis or worse.

ii. Again, what was the response of the people around Jesus?

1. To carry out the Old Testament punishment for blasphemy and stone Him to death...

c. We don't have to look much farther in this story before the Jewish leaders did get a hold of Jesus – and in their zeal to be reverent and honor God and His name – they arrested Him, tortured Him and executed Him.

i. God Himself, the great "I Am" died on a cross

ii. For you, for me... for those Jewish leaders... and for all humanity

iii. Only God could pay for the sins of the whole world – including ours... in this very time and place.

d. The greatest blessing of God the Trinity – God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is that He has shown His love for us by not only becoming one of us, but dying in our stead.

i. When God is a mystery, take into consideration the things that you know by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ii. God the Father created all good things for our lives and continues to sustain us...

iii. God the Son died and rose again for our forgiveness and salvation...

iv. And God the Holy Spirit brought us to faith and sustains us in it...

e. God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit placed His name on you in Baptism – which is the day that He forgave you, gave you an inheritance, and called you His own.

i. A mystery to be sure... but in that gift of saving grace, God has continued to work in your life as any loving parent would do.

ii. In fact, on that day, it was just like an adoption ceremony or the day that God legally bound Himself to you – and He gives us all that Jesus won on the cross.... Forgiveness, life, and salvation.

f. So don't get all caught up in the things that don't make sense... instead consider the ways that God is at work to support you in mind, body and soul.

- i. The great “I Am” is still at work – and even in our limitations to know all about Him – He knows us perfectly well.... We are both sinners and loved
- ii. We are His children, the “apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10) and heirs according to His promise (Galatians 3:29). Amen.