

Matthew 28:16-20 The Holy Trinity Is Revealed! Trinity Sunday June 11, 2017

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Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from His Son and by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The sermon is based on Jesus closing words in Matthew 28: 16-20

These are Your words heavenly Father that we believe in You, the Triune God to be saved. Your Word is.

Dear Christian Friends,

“Breaking news!” We see this every day on TV. Something new has happened and we need to know about it! At least the TV stations want us to think we need to know! Our triune God has given the greatest breaking news about who He is. Without His Word we would say, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in [Him] or come to Him.” (Luther’s explanation to the third article of the Creed) Due to our sinful nature, we couldn’t choose God. According to Paul to the Romans, we can know some qualities of God: His power and wisdom from creation and His holiness revealed by natural law in people’s consciences. But, that doesn’t give us the help we need. In the breaking news of the Word, God revealed Himself: His forgiveness, faithfulness, and compassion. So, let’s review from His Word the breaking news that saves us:

The Holy Trinity Is Revealed!

First, the Trinity is a powerful God of action. We read earlier in Genesis 1 that the three persons of the Trinity created the world and human life. But especially we think of God the Father as Creator. He not only made people, He established a relationship with them: He would be their loving God and they would respond in love as His people. But Adam and Eve’s sin led them into rebellion so people no longer love God. It grieved the Father to see people dying in their sins and receiving eternal punishment.

He sent the second person of the Trinity, His only- begotten Son, to rescue people. He had Jesus assume a humble human nature, for the most part hiding the glory that was His from eternity. The disciples saw Jesus’ miracles; they learned of His vast wisdom from His instruction; they saw His power to drive out demons, and with a command He halted storms and wild waves on the sea. Yet, when they expected Him the most to show His power, when He was in Jerusalem on trial, Jesus hid His divine power. He stood in weakness as they mocked and struck Him. He did nothing to stop His beating and crucifixion. He gave up His spirit in death so that God’s justice for the world’s sin would be satisfied by the shedding of His precious blood. His resurrection was the breaking news of His time to assure His disciples that His saving work was complete. As He spoke to His followers in our verses; Jesus had important news for them.

He assured them that all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him by the Father. And as He commanded them to go and make disciples, they knew that they were not going alone. He Himself would be with them to give them all the resources that they needed to accomplish their mission. Jesus still gives us resources so we can have confidence in Him and pray to Him when we face illnesses or other challenges as Christians.

One of those resources is the Holy Spirit. He has been working since the beginning. When the Father promised to Adam and Eve to send His Son to crush the serpent’s head and set them free, the Spirit worked in their hearts so they believed His words. He continued to bring people to faith throughout the times of the Old Testament. He also gave special gifts to God’s people so that they could show great bravery or strength or so that they could be prophets to speak God’s Word to the people. But, the Holy Spirit worked only among the Jews or with those who came to God through them.

Once Christ's saving work was accomplished through the Jewish nation, the Spirit moved the Apostles and generations of Christians who followed to reach out to all nations that people of every land and tongue might believe and be saved. The Spirit not only worked through the words of Christ, He worked through baptism that Christ instituted. He said, *"Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* (v.19) Many verses describe the powerful blessings of baptism which show that it is not just an outward work of man, it is the Holy Spirit's work. Paul wrote, *"We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body... and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."* (1 Corinthians 12:13) Paul wrote in Titus 3:5: *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."* Peter wrote, *"This water [of Noah's flood] symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 3:21) Again Paul wrote, *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."* (Galatians 3:26-27) The Bible does not call baptism our work for God. It is what the Holy Spirit is doing when the powerful Word of Jesus in our verses is added to the water and we baptize as He commanded. Paul himself spoke of the blessing of baptism when he recalled what a prophet spoke to him. *"Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name."* (Acts 22:16) This is the work of the Holy Spirit. And He will continue to call people to faith through the means of grace. The Bible states, *"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9) This is the breaking news of the Trinity's powerful work for us!

Second, the Holy Trinity is revealed in love! Jesus commanded not only to make disciples by baptizing but by *"teaching them to observe all things [He] commanded."* (v. 20) A disciple is one who trusted and learned from Jesus. Jesus knew that all baptized people no matter what their age need further instruction. And He promised, *"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* (John 14:26) They needed to remember that Jesus was their only source of salvation and of God's love. Jesus gave His perfect body as a sacrifice on the cross as a ransom for all. (1 Timothy 2:5) He defeated the accusing devil and power of death by His death. The world is declared by God to be justified by the work of His Son. By the Holy Spirit we believe these truths of the Trinity and we have eternal life with our loving God.

We could never stand alone against the devil, the world, or our sinful nature. But, our loving God helps us through His powerful Word so we know He is with us. Think of us in this illustration: a small boy got lost in a big city and suddenly saw a tough gang approaching him. He made a fist and tried to look tough and to his surprise they gang ran away. What he didn't see was that behind him were 20 police approaching looking for him. The gang ran from them! So, it takes power far beyond ours to fight evil. Like that boy we won't always see how our loving God is helping us behind the scenes. Yet, we get glimpses when God the Father answers our prayers or when the Holy Spirit helps us to understand His Word and gives us confidence to speak of Jesus. We tell the breaking news: God our loving Father has sent the Holy Spirit so we trust in Jesus. Through faith in Him, we are the children of God. We can't be any closer to Him except in heaven. Let us thank God today for His gracious power working in us that we may know the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and love God in return. Amen.

"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) Amen.