The Holy Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:11-14
June 7, 2020 195-278-241-334

We Believe in the Triune God

I. We are the blessed children of the triune God.
II. We are brothers and sisters in our triune God.

Dear Christian friends,

I hope you'll follow the SUGGESTION in the bulletin and TAKE THE TIME in your **devotions this week** to read the Athanasian Creed in your hymnal. "Now this is the true Christian faith: We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; yet they are not three Gods, but one God. Within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior, but all three persons are coequal and coeternal, so that …all three persons are to be worshiped as one God and one God worshiped as three persons."

You can read the Athanasian Creed and end up scratching your head **asking**, "HUH? SAY WHAT?" The doctrine of the Holy Trinity MAKES NO SENSE. We can't logically explain it, yet **it's true**! It's a good reminder that there IS SO MUCH about God that we just can't explain or **understand** but must simply TRUST and ACCEPT.

We can't explain the Trinity but God wants us to BE CLEAR and **sure** in BOTH our personal relationship **with Him** and in our special relationship **with each other** THROUGH Him. **So today** as we confess, "WE BELIEVE IN THE TRIUNE GOD" let's consider and learn that 1)**we are** the blessed children of the triune God and that 2)**we are** brothers and sisters in our triune God.

I. We are the blessed children of the triune God.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." You regularly hear those words in our **various liturgies**. They're commonly called the APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION or **blessing**. They proclaim the SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP we have with the **triune** God – that we are the **blessed children** of the triune God.

Let's not overlook that BLESSED children of the triune God. Our relationship with God is not one of SUSPICION or HOSTILITY – an uneasy truce with **both God and use** SUSPICIOUS – NOT TRUSTING each other. Our relationship is not of God and us holding each other at ARM'S LENGTH AWAY – let's not get too close to each other. HAVING GOD in our lives – being children of God – is a BLESSING, **not a curse**.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." That's where our relationship with the **triune** God BEGINS – with ***"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."*** You know that ***"grace"*** is God's UNDESERVED love – God giving us the **exact opposite** of what we had coming. When we're honest about **ourselves** and **our sin** we see just HOW AMAZING God's grace really is.

The triune God is our CREATOR God. He made us – He is GREATER than us – He is OVER us – we are UNDER Him. He has every right to TELL US **exactly how** to live our lives and He has done just that with His 10 Commandments. Those commandments cover EVERY MINUTE and **area** of our lives – starting with GOD'S PLACE in our lives – that He is to always come first in our lives. God isn't asking for SOME PLACE in our lives – He claims first place ALL TO HIMSELF. Anything less than that is simply UNACCEPTABLE to God and makes us guilty of REBELLION – rejecting and defying **God's control** of our lives. ANYTHING LESS than that? We haven't come ANYWHERE CLOSE to the total, perfect love, trust, obedience WE OWED God. The **triune** God OWED US nothing but a **life now** that's a LIVING HELL followed by an eternity in the REAL hell's **banishment** and **punishment**.

But by ***"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"*** we are the BLESSED CHILDREN of the **triune** God. SAVOR that grace! God's **own, eternal** Son took on our human flesh and blood and has ***"reconciled"*** and reunited us with our **Creator** God. Jesus lived for us the holy, sinless life we owed God. Jesus took the punishment for the sins of the whole world – He endured the **hell** and died the **death** we had coming. AND NOW – risen triumphant from the dead and ascended into heaven Jesus is ruling all things for our **eternal good**. FOR JESUS' SAKE God has forgiven all our sins. TRUSTING in Jesus we have peace with God – a whole new relationship with God – we are going straight to heaven when we die. Oh, WHAT GRACE – ***"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!"***

"And the love of God." We see our country and world in SUCH A MESS and **turmoil**. Watching the news is **depressing**. We may be struggling with our own PERSONAL PROBLEMS – major health issues – financial or **family** problems, etc. We can EASILY LOSE SIGHT of **the fact** that we are the blessed children of the **triune** God – blessed with the FATHER'S love.

The ULTIMATE proof of God's love is always Jesus – ***"God so loved the world…"*** Just don't stop there! SEE your heavenly **Father's love** as He RICHLY and DAILY provides for you – takes care of you – sends His angels to protect you. SEE your heavenly Father's love in the beautiful flowers and **growing fields** – in the faces and smiles of **friends** and **loved ones** – in the bright blue sky and the shining moon at night and in SO MANY OTHER countless places and **ways**! We are SO BLESSED children of the **heavenly Father**!

"And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." WHERE would we be without the Holy Spirit? He took us ***"dead in our sin and made us alive in Christ –*** (made us) ***a new creation."*** He not only worked **saving faith** in our hearts THROUGH the gospel He's also kept us in the **true faith** and daily helps us LIVE our Christian faith. The Holy Spirit has opened our hearts to the TRUTHS of God's Word – He guides our lives with His Word – He cheers and comforts us with God's presence and promises. We are SO BLESSED with ***"the fellowship of the Holy Spirit!"***

When I stated working on this sermon I DEBATED if **it should be** "WE believe… or I believe in the triune God." Faith is PERSONAL. I can only believe **for myself**. I can't believe for my wife, children, grandchildren, etc. The same is true for you. Yet I'm not the ONLY ONE **who believes** in the triune God. WE along with **so many others** believe in the triune God. That faith puts us in a SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP with the **triune God** AND with **each other**. We are…

II. Brothers and sisters in the triune God.

These are the CLOSING WORDS of Paul's second letter to these Christians in **Corinth, Greece**. They are both LONG letters – 29 chapters between the two. Talk about a church WITH PROBLEMS and one that caused Paul **all kinds** of problems! The congregation was divided into COMPETING **cliques** and factions. Some members questioned and denied BASIC truths such as the resurrection of the dead. Other took God's grace and **forgiveness** AS EXCUSES to keep living in their sin **instead of repenting** of their sin. Corinth was one MESSED-UP congregation. Paul had to write them in STRONG, NO-NONSENSE terms. Yet he ends his letter AS he began it, calling them ***"brothers"*** – ***"Finally, brothers."***

We are FAMILY in the **triune** God! The devil wants to make us a BROKEN family. He wants us to see each other NOT AS ***"brothers"*** and sisters but as ENEMIES – people on OPPOSITE SIDES. Teaming up with our sinful natures the devil is so good at TEARING congregations apart. He can stir up DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY – people want to pick and choose what they believe in God's Word. The devil also knows HOW TO PLAY on hurt feelings and stepped on toes. The devil is an expert at BLOWING UP **little, unimportant** things into MAJOR CONFLICTS. He can get us to CARRY grudges – to not forgive and forget LONG PAST **sins** and **disagreements**. And BEFORE I SEE other people **as guilty** of doing that I better check myself first. Have I also BEEN AT FAULT here? Have I sometimes

failed to see so-and-so AS a ***"brother/sister"*** in Christ and instead seen them as the ENEMY or **at least** as THE PROBLEM? ***"Brothers,"*** Paul wrote. We are BLESSED CHILDREN of the **triune God** and that also makes us ***"brothers"*** and sisters in God.

"Finally" – as a CLOSING WORD of **Christian love**, Paul writes, ***"set things in order. Be encouraged. Agree with one another. Be at peace."*** Don't let the devil RUIN what **God has made** us! Where things are WRONG or in need of REPAIR – ***"set things in order."*** Don't let God's Word GO IN one ear and out the other – ***"be encouraged"*** and guided by it. ***"Agree"*** on WHAT'S IMPORTANT and don't let LITTLE **disagreements** in UNIMPORTANT things become a MAJOR CONTROVERSY. God made peace with us in Jesus – SHOW and SHARE that **same peace** with each other. LIVING by God's grace **automatically** RULES OUT carrying grudges or getting even. ***"As far as it DEPENDS ON YOU, live in peace with everyone,"*** Paul once wrote.

Will this BE EASY? No, each one of us has a very **stubborn, selfish** sinful nature. Will we sometimes have to "SWALLOW HARD" or "PUT UP" with some things we'd **rather not**? Yes. But how this for encouragement – ***"And the God of love and peace will be with you."*** The triune God is ***"the God of love"*** and WHAT A LOVE He has for us – so patient – so forgiving. The **triune** God is ***"the God of love AND PEACE."*** God made peace with us sinners ALL AT His expense and **doing**. EACH ONE of us daily enjoys God's ***"love and peace"*** – HOW can we not show ***"love and peace"*** to others – and ESPECIALLY to our ***"brothers"*** and sisters in the triune God?

"Finally, brothers, rejoice." "Rejoice" is also the Greek word for "farewell – good-bye." The more I think about that the MORE I LIKE it. What a beautiful way to **say good-bye** – to encourage each other to ***"rejoice." "Rejoice"*** IN WHOM your God is. ***"Rejoice"*** in what He's all done for you – in what He's made of you – in what He's all promised you. SAYING **"good-bye"** can also be A TIME for ***"rejoicing."*** We don't know what the FUTURE will all bring – life right now can be pretty ROUGH and UGLY – we may not see each other again in this life but still ***"rejoice!" "Rejoice"*** – WE BELIEVE in the **triune** God – we are the blessed children of the **triune** God – brothers and sisters in Him. SO – ***"finally, REJOICE!"*** Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED