

May 30, 2021
The Holy Trinity
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH
Pastor Joel Sutton

Isaiah 6:1-8

THE ONE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY GOD MAKES YOU HOLY.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Our text for meditation today comes from God’s prophet Isaiah, the 6th chapter, that you heard read earlier.

Today the Christian Church celebrates the ***Holy Trinity***. It’s the one Sunday in the Church Year that we set aside to remind ourselves about the existence and nature of our triune God. Every Sunday we confess the ***Holy Trinity*** in various ways but because of our sinful nature, you and I become casual and careless about our faith, and lose sight of the truth of who our God is. Unfortunately, many times, when we gather for worship, we simply go through the motions. We don’t even think about what we are doing in worship and why we’re doing it.

When someone visits the Lutheran church for the first time, they’ll often ask: “*Why all the standing and sitting and kneeling? Why can’t we just come in and sit down?*” The answer is, when we gather to worship, our body language or posture reflects our attitude of worship. Scripture teaches various postures that God’s people of old used in His presence so we utilize some of those same postures. (The Lutheran Study Bible, 1276-1277) Bowing is the posture of reverence, respect, and devotion. Kneeling and standing with the head bowed are the postures of unworthiness and contrition in prayer. We sit to listen. We stand in honor and respect of hearing the reading of the Holy Gospel. And we also stand to return thanks and to praise God.

Jesus says:

“²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

(Matthew 18:20)

So, our worship begins by invoking the Name of the ***holy Trinity***: “*In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*” It is imploring God’s divine presence in this place where He promises to come to us to pour out His gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. It’s the very same Holy Name that you were marked with in Baptism where God marked you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified, and adopted you into the Christian family.

After you confess your sins, “*I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*” We stand to sing the Introit in which we pray the Gloria Patri: “*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.*”

We even stand to sing the last stanza of a hymn when it has a triangle next to the stanza number. The triangle indicates the **Holy Trinity** and that the stanza is a **doxological** stanza. A **doxology** is words of praise addressed to our **Triune** God. So, for that triangled doxological stanza, we stand in honor of singing praises to our God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It has been said that the doctrine of the **Trinity** is an invention of mankind. Some will say: “*The word Trinity isn’t even in the Bible.*” Perhaps you’ve heard the claim that all religions worship the same God, we just call Him by different names. And when you and I go on auto-pilot or cruise-control in our faith, ignoring the truth of the **Holy Trinity**, we become casual and careless and thereby are easy prey for the devil and his deceptions and false doctrines that teach that our God is not the **one and only true God**.

The **Holy Trinity** is what sets the Christian Church apart from all other sects, cults, and false religions. While it’s true that the Bible **doesn’t** contain the word **Trinity**, it **does** teach the doctrine of the **Holy Trinity** in many places. In Scripture, God tells us His Name. He tells us that God is One (cf: Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4), and yet at the same time, He’s the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (cf: Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19). It’s the eternal truth of the nature of God. There is only one true God and He’s the **Holy Trinity** – three persons – yet one divine essence. Accept no imitations or substitutes. As you confessed earlier in the Athanasian Creed:

***Whoever desires to be saved must,
above all, hold the catholic (universal) faith...
... that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing
the persons nor dividing the substance.***

Three persons – one essence. One Eternal, Uncreated, Infinite, Almighty, God, and Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. None is greater or less than another, each coeternal and coequal. The Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.

You and I can’t understand it. There’s no analogy, illustration, or human thought to clarify the **Holy Trinity**. It’s a profound mystery! The, doctrine of the Trinity is an essential article of the Christian faith. So essential, that we confess the **Trinity** each week in the Creed, and this morning, we confessed it in detail. It’s a reminder to ourselves and confession before others what we believe regarding **who** God is. Because anyone who worships someone who is not the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is worshipping nothing but an imaginary false god and destined for eternal damnation.

One of many places where Scripture points us to the **Holy Trinity** is our Old Testament lesson this morning. God is about to send Isaiah to the people of Judah as His spokesman to proclaim death and destruction. It wasn’t Isaiah’s idea. Isaiah didn’t choose God. God chose him and sent him to deliver a message that would be difficult to hear. The people had turned away from God into idolatry so the Lord was going to allow foreigners to devour their land and people. Only a remnant would survive. (cf: Isaiah 1:7-9) Isaiah would also tell of the promised Messiah (Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12) and the glories that the Messiah would usher in in His rule and reign. (cf: Isaiah 2:1-5).

To prepare Isaiah for his task, the God sent him a vision. It was a vision of the Lord in all His power and glory seated high upon His throne with the train of His robe filling the temple. (cf: Isaiah 6:1-5). And standing above Him were seraphim:

“And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’” (Is 6:3).

The triple repetition of Holy accentuates God’s complete holiness, completely separated from sin. But ***“Holy, Holy, Holy”*** says something else too. The seraphim are announcing the Trinity: Holy is the Father, Holy is the Son, and Holy is the Holy Spirit. Three Holy persons in one Holy God.

For Isaiah, the vision was overwhelming! The earth was shaking and the house was filled with smoke. What appears to you and me as a glorious moment, is for Isaiah, a moment of terror. He knows that no one can see God and live (cf: Exodus 33:20). Even the seraphim covered their eyes so as not to gaze upon the glory of the Lord. But Isaiah stands before the Holy God, most likely with his head bowed. As an unclean man living among an unclean people, there was nothing he could do but confess his sin saying:

“Woe is me! For I am lost...” (Isaiah 6:5)

One of the seraphim takes a burning coal from the altar and touches it on Isaiah’s mouth and declares:

“Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:6–7)

The righteous God forgives the unrighteous, giving His righteousness to Isaiah.

The temple altar is where sacrifices for sin were made. A burning coal from the altar touching Isaiah’s lips was God’s absolution of forgiveness. The only way God could send out Isaiah as His spokesman was if he had been cleansed of his sin. Only after God has forgiven Isaiah, will Isaiah be able and ready to proclaim God’s Holy Word. Forgiven, restored, and strengthened, Isaiah responds to the call of God saying:

“Here I am! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:8)

What does this mean for you and me? Brothers and sisters in Christ, because of our sinfulness, like Isaiah, you and I can neither enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor come into the presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Hosts. God does not dwell with sinners. So, if you and I wish to be saved from death and damnation, like Isaiah, we must confess:

“Woe is me! For I am lost...” (Isaiah 6:5).

Like Isaiah, you didn’t choose God. God called you and chose you in Christ Jesus. Your absolution and forgiveness doesn’t come from a seraphim carrying a burning coal from the temple altar, but from Jesus’ body given and blood shed on the altar of the cross. You now come before God’s throne in repentance, remembering your Baptism where you were born from above, born of the water and the Spirit, where you were joined into Christ’ death and resurrection, where you were marked with God’s trinitarian Name, drowning your old Adam, and covering you with the robe of Christ’s righteousness saying:

“... your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isaiah 6:7)

For the sake of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, you are forgiven, restored, and strengthened.

Because you now bear the righteousness of Christ, you can stand comfortably before the **Holy Trinity**. God called you and chose you as:

"... a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

And like Isaiah you can now respond to the **Holy Trinity** saying: ***"Here I am! Send me..."*** proclaiming the excellencies of God who so loved the world, that he gave His only Son Jesus to bleed and die for you so that you **will not** perish but have eternal life. God has called you so that you can proclaim the excellencies of God the Holy Spirit who creates and sustains faith in the preaching and hearing of God's Word. And where do you proclaim this? Wherever you are. At home, at work, at school, with your next-door neighbor. Wherever God sends you in this sinful world. God continues to call pastors and teachers and every Christian to live a life dedicated to Him, serving in whatever station, vocation, or capacity He has placed you.

It's all the work of the **Holy Trinity**. God the Father gives His Son to die on the cross to rescue you from sin, death, and the grave. And so you can believe this, God the Father and God the Son, send God the Holy Spirit to bring you to faith and to keep you in the true faith. And until Jesus comes again to take you to heaven, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can live a life of love and service to God and to your neighbor.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,
Amen.