



[Pastor Steven Billings](#)

Sermon for the Feast of the Holy Trinity
June 12, 2022

He Is Our God

John 8:48–59

⁴⁸ *The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”* ⁴⁹ *Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me.* ⁵⁰ *Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.* ⁵¹ *Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”* ⁵² *The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’”* ⁵³ *Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”* ⁵⁴ *Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’”* ⁵⁵ *But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.* ⁵⁶ *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”* ⁵⁷ *So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”* 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.*

Today is the Feast of the Holy Trinity, when we Christians focus our attention on one of the most inexplicable, amazing messages of Scripture, in which God teaches us the baffling mystery that He is ONE GOD, and yet there are THREE DIVINE PERSONS within the one true God.

As we will confess in the Athanasian Creed: “The Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal . . . The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God” (LSB, p. 319).

Not many things in the Bible stand so far beyond the reach of our human reason as what God says about Himself. He’s caused to be written so many things that are clear and simple, so that even a child can understand. For example, God clearly says:

- Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8);
- The blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7); and
- Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16).



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Why does He say these things so clearly and simply? Because He doesn't require the power of your intellect to save you. He speaks clearly and simply to you, even giving you the ears to hear (Luke 7:22) and faith to believe what you hear (Rom. 10:17), so that your salvation will *not* rest on your ability to understand. You have God's gift of eternal life, *not* because of your mental acuity, but because of the power of His Word, simply spoken to you, concerning Jesus and His death on the cross for your sins.

The doctrine of the Trinity, however, is *not* about the simplicity of God's speech, but, rather, about the immense depth, immeasurable expanse, and unfathomable mystery of who our God *is*. Today, then, is about God revealing Himself to us in Holy Scripture as no heart of man has ever imagined [1 Cor. 2:9]. This is a day for us to stand in wonder and awe at our God, whose thoughts and ways are higher than ours, just as the heavens are above the earth [Is. 55:8-9]. Today, we rejoice that we have and hold a faith that is much greater than we are; it's a day for us to confess, according to the Scriptures, even those things we cannot understand.

God is so merciful toward you, beloved, so kindly disposed toward you, that He uses even the mysterious things of His Word for your blessing and benefit! His profound compassion has moved Him to say clear and simple things to you, yet, that same compassion has caused Him to say things to you that no one can ever fathom or understand, such as: "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God." What a great gift our compassionate God has given to us in this!

But, you may be wondering: Why is it such a great gift, that God would say things to you that far exceed anything you can imagine or comprehend?

First, it is a gift that you will never be fooled into thinking that you are the master of your own life. Things may have happened in your life that you would never have chosen for yourself. But, because God's thoughts are above your thoughts and His ways beyond your ways (Is. 55:8), it's possible now for you to believe that God in His Wisdom might have allowed such things for your blessing and good – even though *you* would never have chosen them. And, who knows what things you will experience in the future? Because God's thoughts are above your thoughts and His ways beyond your ways – because God sees farther and judges more wisely than you ever could – you can trust that the ups and downs of your life are never outside of His watchful care. Your three-in-one God remains – and will remain – totally devoted to you, even when it seems like He's not around!

Secondly, it's a gift that no one ever becomes a master of the sacred scriptures, and, therefore, that all believers remain equal in God's family, from the youngest to the oldest, from the newest convert to those who've been Christians from infancy. In the presence of this vast, incomprehensible God, we all stand together, equally empty-handed, none of us able to give Him anything – including the powers of our intellect. No one can know God more deeply than Scripture reveals Him. Because He is so far beyond each of us, He cannot be mastered by any of us, and therefore we all stand on an equal plane before Him, not one of us greater than the rest of us.



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Finally, the greatest aspect of all: the inexplicable Trinity focuses our attention on Jesus. The unknowable-ness of God chases us to that One human-and-divine Person in Whom God makes Himself known: Jesus Christ the Righteous! He says to the Jews in today's Gospel: "You say, 'He is our God,' but you have not known Him." This was a rebuke for those Jews who had God right in front of them but didn't recognize Him. But, then, for *your* comfort and joy, He adds these words: "I know Him and I keep His Word." He says elsewhere, "No one knows the Father except the Son" (Mat. 11:27); and again, "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The Father has declared that Jesus "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the Word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

Simply stated, dear friends: the unfathomable mystery of the Trinity keeps our eyes focused on Jesus because Jesus is the only one who understands the mystery! We turn to Jesus to see what God looks like, and we see Him crucified and hanging on a cross for our salvation. We listen to Jesus to hear what God sounds like, and we hear Him in the scriptures speaking words of forgiveness, life, and salvation. When we want to be with God, we gather where Jesus says *He* will be: here on the altar, and there in the font.

So, today's a really good day. The Feast of the Holy Trinity brings us the benefit of our God's unsurpassed greatness. Trinity Sunday is a good day for us to praise God that "The Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal . . . The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God" (LSB, p. 319).

This one God in three Persons is the God who's saved you, beloved. He's the God of your past, the God of your present, and the God of your future. This God is greater than you and greater than me – even more so, He's greater than anything that can ever happen to you and more powerful than any enemy that could ever rise against you. Even when you're in the midst of things you can't understand, the inexplicable teaching of the Trinity allows you not to become obsessed about it, but rather, to shrug your shoulders and say with confidence and joy, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord" (Rom. 14:8). Blessed be our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.