

Sermon for Holy Trinity Sunday June 11, 2017

Grace to you and peace through the Holy Spirit, from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. Anna and I are leaving for California tomorrow. We will be driving down the Oregon and California coasts to San Jose to visit my son and daughter in law. We chose the coastal route for a few reasons. First, Anna has never seen the redwoods. Second, we really like looking at the ocean. Many of you have been down the Oregon coast and you know what a scenic drive that is, so we will enjoy that. And third, we won't have to deal with I-5 at all until we begin our way home. Even then, we will be driving by Mount Shasta and some pretty great scenery as we come north.

We plan to spend a significant amount of time experiencing the marvels of creation. God saw that it was good, and we will see what God has created. We will look at the ocean, take in some whale watching, hike among some great, big trees that have been around since before Jesus was a little boy, and probably watch a sunset, maybe even a sunrise while we are away. I have to admit, I can hardly wait to hit the road. I love you all dearly, but it will be good to get away for a few days.

Have you ever wondered why so many people are drawn to watch the sunset? It seems like all over the place, people look west to watch the sun slip below the horizon. I have heard some of you talk about the beautiful sunsets around here as well. Is it because of the pretty colors? It is because of the closure it brings to the end of the day? Is it because people are drawn to some sort of spiritual connection

between our small, insignificant selves and that giant, cosmic ball of gas that keeps the earth warm enough to support life?

For me, I'm more attracted to the colors that appear in the sky at sunset. Scientists can tell you why they are there, but I don't need to know that to appreciate the magnificence of a beautiful sunset. I don't need to know the science behind the beauty of a night sky. I can just be like David in the psalm and appreciate the wonder of the stars. I don't need to know about the science of the right kind of climate to grow really big trees that can keep on growing for thousands of years. I can just appreciate the wonder of all of God's creation; all that God called very good.

Don't get the wrong idea. I think people knowing science is critical. My son in San Jose is a physicist, so I am all in favor of science. Science has given us lots of new medicines and discoveries, but science does not detract from the beauty of creation. I don't believe science and God are opposed to each other. I think God gave us critical thinking skills so we can use science to make our lives better for God's sake. I think science is a beautiful thing, and the more science discovers, the bigger God gets, at least in my mind.

God created, not just a livable world, but a beautiful world. God gave us beauty in the stars of heaven, in the magnificence of the ocean, and in the brilliance of sunsets. God gave us, not only the wonders of creation, but God gave us the fellowship of each other where we share God's love and marvel together at all that God has done for us.

It is Holy Trinity Sunday. Ever since 1334 we set aside the Sunday after Pentecost to remember that God is three persons in one essence. The problem is that lots of people try to take this as an opportunity to try to explain the Holy Trinity; to try to explain God. I don't see the point. I do not need to explain how I know that God is at work to see the hand of God among us. I can see the hand of God at work in every baptism, in every fellowship event, in every community encounter, and even in every worship service. I can see God at work and in seeing God at work it reinforces my trust in the promises of God. I think it is much more helpful to trust in the promises of God than trying to explain God. It is more helpful to trust in what God has said God will do for us, with us and through us.

In the gospel reading Jesus promises his disciples, and by extension us, that he will always be with us. Jesus reminds them of what is already written in Psalm 139 that there isn't any place we can go where God is not already there. Jesus makes a promise to be with his disciples even as he is being lifted up to heaven to take his place in glory.

Obviously, Jesus cannot be physically present because the disciples just watched him ascend in the clouds. Jesus is spiritually present. Just as Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples in John chapter 20, just as the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost and they spoke in other languages, just as the Holy Spirit has called you into this very room today, Jesus is present as he promised. Jesus is present because we worship one God, known to us as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

We worship one God and God gave us very explicit instructions to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

Our command to go into all the world is something that still applies today, but the most important part to remember is we do nothing alone. God is with us always. When you go on vacation, God is there. When you go to the grocery store, God is there. When you go about your daily business, God is there, and every now and again God will give you an opportunity to see God's hand at work, right there where you are.

You will see God at work in the clasp of a baby holding her daddy's hand. You will see God at work in the warmth of a loving touch. You will see God at work in the sunset, in the trees, in the ocean and sometimes you will even see God at work in an argument. You will see God at work when respect continues even through a disagreement. You will see God at work when anger ends with reconciliation. You will see God at work where peace overcomes war.

Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of God; bringing your loved ones into God's own family; teaching your loved ones what you already know about how much God loves each person God has made because we all bear the image of God, and God is love. Go to people that God has already claimed and teach them about the promises that Jesus has made that God will be with us, to the end of the age. Go, because Jesus is already there, as promised. Amen.