

Trinity Sunday 2010

NIV Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Prayer: Oh triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, thank you for your mercy and for revealing to us your plan of salvation. Help us today to live as your justified people, always confident of your loving protection and always filled with hope for today and tomorrow.

Introduction: Trinity Sunday? “What’s there to talk about?”, somebody might wonder. No one can truly understand the tri-une God, can they? We even made up a word in Latin to describe God, tri-uno, 3 in 1. Because it is beyond our human understanding, we are tempted to brush it off as insignificant and meaningless. But be careful. There is only one place to find out the truth – the Word of God. In the Bible the true God pulls back the curtain and reveals his true identity to us. As we read God’s Word he reveals himself as three persons in one God and then he reveals to us His plan to save sinners. The result of the triune God and the plan of salvation is that we are justified! Now that is important! That is worth more than all the treasures in the world. We are justified! The triune God said so. God the Son made peace and God the Holy Spirit keeps hope alive.

1) The Triune God said So!

The Muslim faith has its foundation in the teaching that God (Allah) is one. As its founder, Muhammad, tried to clean up all the idolatry to added Gods. That’s not so bad right? God is one. The Jewish faith also affirms that God is one. That’s not so bad right? Unitarians affirm the simple oneness of God. Then there are the Jehovah’s Witnesses who teach that there is only one God. Not so bad right? At best these people only see a small portion of the true God, and at its worst the God they think they are worshipping is not the God found and revealed in the Bible.

The problem lies in the fact that when we stray from the truth of the Triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, we will lose the plan of salvation for sinners. The results of striking out on the plan of salvation have eternal consequences. We are left to justify our own sinful actions before our holy Creator and Judge. How much is ever enough?

The teaching of justification was so important to the Apostle Paul that before he could get to Rome and visit with the church there he sent a letter in advance. The letter to the Romans is all about what the triune God did to save the world of sinners: justification. The church was being confused and led away by false ideas about God and sinful mankind. Some believed that Jesus was a man who showed us how to make up for our crimes against God. Others believed that Jews were saved one way and gentiles another way. Like the Jews, Muslims, Unitarians and Jehovah’s witnesses today, they thought that Jesus wasn’t God. The consequences of that are dire. If Jesus Christ is not God then our sins are still not paid for. We still owe an eternal debt to God.

The salvation you hope for in this life and in the one to come is rooted and grounded in the fact that the Lord, Jesus Christ is gracious to you, that your Heavenly Father loves you, and that the Holy Spirit has applied to you the benefits of Christ’s perfect life and innocent death. Paul writing to the Corinthians put it this way:

NIV 2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We are forgiven our sins and declared not guilty by the Triune God Father Son and Holy Spirit. One of the phrases that I say to my children, I learned from my Father and Mother, "Because I said so." Who alone has the authority to cancel our debt? Not any pastor, not any other human. But is it not God alone who has the authority and right to punish us for our sins or to show mercy on us? Well. God said so. That's why I am not guilty. We are justified by God and have no need to try and justify ourselves. We don't have to nor can we make up for our past sins. We don't have to fret if we have worked hard enough or done enough good with our life to earn God's mercy. Because God said so. That was God's plan – it would be all him from start to finish.

2) God the Son made peace

But his mercy is not without reason. His reason for declaring us not guilty is based on the work of the Son of God the second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Son of God brought the sinful world together with the Holy God. By his perfect life he fulfilled the requirements for peace. By his holy and innocent sufferings and death he paid the debt the world of sinners owed. Jesus Christ is not only a good man, he is our immortal God as well, whose blood was so precious that it was enough in value to pay off the debt of every sinner that has ever or will ever walk this earth. Jesus Christ made peace for sinners. You might say that he is our sponsor. He sponsors us to be a member of God's forgiven family. Our salvation our justification has been made possible by a grant from Jesus Christ. As Paul said because of the sacrifice of Jesus we have gained access to God's grace in which we now stand. Everyday, morning, noon and night, asleep or awake, happy or sad, sick or healthy, rich or poor we stand in a shower of God's grace because of the work of the Son of God our Lord and our brother. Because he is the Son of God who became a man he is able to pay for all our sins and bring us peace.

3) God the Holy Spirit Keeps Hope Alive

But how does what the Son of God did on the cross outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago get applied to my account personally? In steps the Holy Spirit who keeps our hope alive. The third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, comes to us through the Word of God and gives us faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin. With that faith comes a sure and certain hope of eternal life. Someday we will receive all the blessings promised to God's people is a statement flowing from faith. It is a statement of a Christian's hope in God's plan of salvation. Our hope is not just for heaven but also we have a sure hope in this life as well. We have a hopeful outlook on every pressure we feel in life. That positive hopeful attitude flows from faith in Jesus Christ that we have peace with God, our creator and preserver.

One thing that I have learned over the years of marriage is that to keep the fire burning in your relationship you must make an effort. Spending time alone, talking, listening, sharing, smiling, and caring. When it comes to our peace with God and being his forgiven children, we often ignore the triune God. We often talk and act selfishly, showing ourselves to be uncaring of God's Will for our life. The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity that keeps our hope alive in God's mercy. He comes through the gospel and reminds us of all the promises God makes to us. He fans into flame the gift of faith, keeping our hope alive in God's plan and His promises.

Does the doctrine of the Trinity matter? Of course it does. In the Bible God reveals to us who he is – three persons in one God - by revealing to us the plan of salvation: We are justified by God, because of the work of salvation by the Son of God, our Savior and through the work of the Holy Spirit giving us faith and hope in God's plan of salvation, keeping our hope alive. We are justified.