

Pericope Study for Sunday June 11, 2017 – Trinity A

Presented by Pastor Richard Burgess

Collect / Prayer of the Day (ELW)

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

God of heaven and earth, before the foundation of the universe and the beginning of time you are the triune God: Author of creation, eternal Word of salvation, life-giving Spirit of wisdom. Guide us to all truth by your Spirit, that we may proclaim all that Christ has revealed and rejoice in the glory he shares with us. Glory and praise to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Thought Questions for Trinity A

Today is usually billed as “The Holy Trinity”. Why is it holy? Why is the Holy Spirit “holy” but not the Father or the Son?

Explain the Trinity so a five year old can understand it. Assuming you can, should you? How can you tell if a five year old understands the Trinity?

There are two Trinitarian formulas in today’s lessons: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.” (2 Cor 13.13 NRSV) and “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. (Mt 28.19b NRSV) Compare and contrast:

- Theological content
- Use in worship and liturgy
- Use and relevance in pastoral care
- Possible preaching use

“Experiencing the Holy Trinity” on my web site has visual, musical, theological, and mathematical expressions of the Trinity. It’s online at: http://www.richardmburgess.com/topical_stuff/experiencing_the_holy_trinit

y.

How do you pastorally discourage modalism? Should you?

Can the Trinity be fun? Would that be OK?

Some theologians like to think of the Trinity as a dance. Would it be OK to dance “The Holy Trinity” in the aisles this week? Or is that only for theologians?

What are you going to use for your closing benediction this week? Are you going to explain it?

Read “The Shack”.

Possible Sermon Titles for Trinity A

As usual, use at your own risk.

| | Gen | 2Cor | Mt |
|---|-----|------|----|
| Even God Rested | X | | |
| God Created | X | | |
| God Said, “Let It Be” | X | | |
| God Said, “Make It So” | X | | |
| God Saw Good; God Said Good | X | | |
| In the Beginning | X | | |
| Six Days of Creation – Or Was It Seven? | X | | |
| Grace, Love, & Communion Are for You Today | | X | |
| Holy Kisses for All | | X | |
| Put Things in Order, Listen, Agree, Live in Peace | | X | |
| The Holy Kiss of the Lord Be with You Always | | X | |
| We All Greet You with a Holy Kiss | | X | |
| From Chaos into Order | X | X | |
| Does “With You Always” Really Mean “Always”? | | | X |
| Go Therefore | | | X |
| Making Disciples of All Nations | | | X |
| To the End of the Age | | | X |
| Up on the Mountain One Last Time | | | X |
| Kiss, Multiply, & Proselytize | X | X | X |

Lesson I: Genesis 1:1-2:4a (NRSV)

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill

the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷So God created humankind in his image,

in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1}Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

^{4a}These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Genesis 1:1-2:4a (cont)

Outline / Structure:

- 1.1-5 Day 1: Separate light from darkness
- 1.6-8 Day 2: Separate waters from below from waters from above with “dome”
- 1.9-13 Day 3: Separate land from sea and create vegetation
- 1.14-19 Day 4: Separate day from night and mark seasons of days and years – stars in dome
- 1.20-23 Day 5: Populate waters with “living creatures” and sky with birds
- 1.24-25 Day 6a: Populate land with (non human) animals
- 1.26-31 Day 6b: Create humans in God’s image and put in charge of earth, animals, and plants
- 2.1-4a Day 7: God rested from creation

Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

Gen 1.1 – 2.4a “Creation stories in the ancient world were not so much contemplations of how things were made out of nothing at the very beginning, as how some life-giving order was brought to a chaotic, death dealing world. This one is no exception. The ordering of the chaotic ‘mess’ into something life-giving, takes place by dividing or separating things: light from dark, waters above from those below, water from land, day from night (vv. 3-19). As the division proceeds it becomes concerned not with just separating what is death dealing from what is life-giving, but with separation of things within creation which will contribute in their diversity to creation’s welfare. We should note however, that the chaotic is not completely removed, but sits at the edges of creation (vv. 4, 7) . . .” (Howard Wallace, “OT Readings”, <http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/WebOTcomments/OrdinaryA/Trinity.html>, ¶2)

Gen 1.1-19 The stuff in the first four days are created by separating various inanimate things. The living things in days 5 & 6 are actually created outright. Why separating for non-living things and actually creating for living things?

Gen 1.1 *In the beginning* What is this “beginning”?

Gen 1.24-31 Humans and non human animals are made in the same day, but humans are singled out as different, so why don’t we get our own day?

Gen 1:26 “*Let us make... in our image*: The plural “us” likely refers to a council or assembly of divine beings (see also 1 Kgs 22; Job 1). Again, God shares the creative process with those who are not God.” (Lutheran Study Bible) If the Lutheran Study Bible is right, does this ruin the Trinitarian relevance for Genesis 1.1–2.4a as today’s first lesson?

Gen 1:28 “*subdue... dominion*: God shares power with the human. Having dominion is understood as care-giving, not exploitation. To subdue implies that God’s creation was not perfect and continued to need work.” (Lutheran Study Bible)

Gen 2.3 *God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it* What does it mean that God *hallowed* the Sabbath? Why didn’t God hallow other parts of the creation?

Gen 2.3 Did God create on the seventh day?

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

[Paul writes:] ¹¹Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

2Cor 13.11-13 Context: In this letter Paul has defended himself against critics, appealed for his collection in Jerusalem, alluded to various sufferings and conflicts, and mentioned an earlier painful letter to the Corinthians. In other words, this is a letter written out of conflict, struggles, need, and pain. It is also thought to be a composite of two or more letters.

2Cor 13.11 How do you think this works as a formula for “peace”?

2Cor 13.12 Maybe this week instead of greeting each other with a hand shake and “The Peace of the Lord”, how about a “holy kiss” as you pass the peace. “The Holy Kiss of the Lord be with you always!”

2Cor 13.13 This is the usual opening greeting of our worship liturgy. The Trinity is usually given as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”, but here the order is Lord Jesus Christ, God, and Holy Spirit. Why Jesus first? Why is the Father more often first? What about the Spirit?

2Cor 13.13 “Unlike the clearly Trinitarian baptismal formula of Matt 28:19, this benediction does not refer to Christ as ‘the Son’ nor to God as ‘the Father.’ It neither presupposes nor teaches anything specific about the relationship of Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit. Rather it focuses attention only on the *grace* and the *love* which characterize God’s dealings with humanity, and on the believers’ joint *participation in the Holy Spirit*. All three themes are at home in Paul’s theology, and the three are always closely related.” (Dan Nelson, “Text Studies”, no longer available online)

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Notes, Observations, and Thought Questions:

Mt 28.17 *but some doubted* What might those *doubts* have been?

Mt 28.18-19 What are the implications of the Great Commission (28.19-20) coming out of Jesus’ *all authority in heaven and on earth*? The “all authority” part? The “in heaven and earth” part?

Mt 28.19 Why baptize in the name of the Father & Son & Holy Spirit?

Mt 28.19 What does it mean to *make disciples*? Do we actually do that?

Mt 28.19 How important is it that baptisms be done? That they be done in the name of the Trinity?

Mt 28.20 If Jesus is *with (us) always*, why do we need to *remember* it?