

Pericope Study for Holy Trinity C – Sunday, June 16, 2019

Presented Tuesday, June 11, 2019 by Richard Burgess

Collect / POD (ELW)	Collect / POD (LBW)
<p>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.</p> <p>or</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Almighty God our Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, renewing and fulfilling creation by your eternal Spirit, and revealing your glory through our Lord, Jesus Christ: Cleanse us from doubt and fear, and enable us to worship you, with your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, living and reigning, now and forever. (77)</p> <p>or</p> <p>Almighty and ever-living God, you have given us grace, by the confession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and, in the power of your divine majesty, to worship the unity. Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your eternal glory, one God, now and forever. (78)</p>

I usually use the first Collect / POD from the ELW, but depending on the emphasis of the sermon or the day, I sometimes find it useful to use the alternate or an old one from the LBW. This week presents a plethora of POD possibilities. Enjoy.

General Comments:

Trinity Sunday is a festival focused more on doctrine than text or application. On the one hand, the Trinity is about the nature of God, not about us humans. On the other hand, most of us try to make our sermons somewhat helpful to people living lives in the so-called “real world”. On the other other hand most of us usually preach on one of the lectionary texts, not a sort of related topic. What are you inclined and/or likely to do? Do you have any other other hands?

Most of us have at one time or another been lectured on various heresies related to the Trinity and/or incarnation. Which is your favorite? Your parishioners? Do you need to preach (on) it?

God is one of those interesting people who can't easily be summed up in a few words or a tidy formula. Symbols, poetry (eg, Proverbs 8), the arts, etc might help here. How can your creativity contribute to enhancing people's relationship with God via trinitarian stuff?

What are the pros & cons of various representations of the Trinity, eg, triangles, circles, Celtic knots, graids, icons, etc? Are there any stories or movies that might be helpful? What do you think about all the little birds in so many artist's representations of the Trinity?

A liturgical format of the LBW Athanasian Creed attached. This creed is part of our confessions, both in the Book of Concord and ELCA Statement of Faith. Some might say it falls a little short of being excessively inclusive. What is the place of the Athanasian Creed in the 21st Century?

Possible Sermon Titles for Trinity C:

As usual, use at your own risk.

	Trinity	Pr	Rom	Jn
Three in One or One in Three? Make Up Your Mind!	X			
The Royal "We" Is Three	X			
What If Pigpen's Cloud of Dust Was a White Dove?	X			
The Father, The Son, & The Holy Ghost Walked into a Bar . . .	X			
The Very Nature of God	X			
Wise Lady Wisdom, Wise Lord Jesus		X		
When He . . .		X		
Suffering Doesn't Disappoint Us			X	
God's Love Has Been Poured into Your Heart			X	
Hope Does Not Disappoint Us			X	
Peace with God			X	
All That the Father Has Has Been Declared to You				X
All That the Father Has Belongs to Jesus				X
The Best Is Yet to Come				X
Exegetical Underwear Abounds	X	X	X	X

Experiencing the Holy Trinity

from http://www.richardmburgess.com/topical_stuff/experiencing_the_holy_trinity

On the web page underlined titles are links to the material described.

The Holy Trinity in Visual Art

A sermon I gave once on Trinity Sunday. All of the art is some form of representation of the Trinity.

Unpublished Essay on the Trinity by Jonathan Edwards

One theological explanation of the Trinity in language that is reasonably accessible while being theologically sound. Forget the hellfire and brimstone rant you read in high school. The real Jonathan Edwards all about the love of God,

Passacaglia and Fugue in c by JS Bach; Karl Richter, organ

The variations over a ground bass are grouped in threes to represent the Trinity. This is an amazing performance of one of the pinnacles of Western music. All inspired by the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

"Trinity" Article in Wikipdeia

Includes samples of artwork on the Trinity.

"Hilbert Space" Article in Wikipedia

One of my teachers once told me that when the Trinity was explained to him in seminary his immediate response was "Hilbert Spaces!" I think it's pretty exciting that mathematics manifests the nature of the Trinity, especially considering that mathematics only accidentally has anything to do with anything.

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 (NRSV)

^{8.1}Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her
voice?
²On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
³beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries
out:
⁴"To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.

²²The Lord created me at the beginning of
his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
²³Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the
earth.
²⁴When there were no depths I was brought
forth,
when there were no springs abounding
with water.
²⁵Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
²⁶when he had not yet made earth and
fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
²⁷When he established the heavens, I was
there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the
deep,
²⁸when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the
deep,
²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress
his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the
earth,
³⁰then I was beside him, like a master
worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race."

Notes, Observations, Thought Questions

Context: Proverbs 8 & 9 together are one unit on wisdom and folly.

What is "wisdom"? Is it Jesus?

Wisdom is a feminine noun in both Hebrew (Hakmah) & Greek (Sophia). Is this significant? A Coincidence? A misunderstanding of grammatical gender? Why is Lady Wisdom the first reading for Father's Day?

8.22-31 "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago," and it continues with wisdom looking like a co-creator, a la "Logos" in John 1. Was "wisdom" created, a creator, or some kind of "both/and"? Is this a problem?

8.22-24 "Using 1 Corinthians 1:24, which refers to Jesus as the "wisdom of God," a man named Arius argued that Jesus, like wisdom, was the first created thing. As a created being, he could not be equal to God. Another church leader, Athanasius, translated the Proverbs passage differently. He spoke of wisdom as being the head of creation and born from God as a child is born from one's parent. This understanding was accepted by the church and appears in the phrase we recite in the Nicene Creed: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, . . . true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.'" (Lutheran Study Bible)

8.22 *created* or "possessed" or "acquired".

8.26b-31 *when he . . . (7 times) Then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always . . .* This is about wisdom & "God", but also sounds like talk of the love between persons of the Trinity. Compare this mutual delight & rejoicing to ELW 412 "Come, Join the Dance of Trinity". (attached)

Romans 5:1-5 (NRSV)

^{5.1}Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Notes, Observations, Thought Questions

5.1-2 This is a very compact summary of Christian soteriology. How much does it need to be unpacked in a sermon?

5.3-5 Compare to GNT: troubles -> endurance -> God's approval -> hope -> non-disappointment.

5.4 "character" (NRSV)
"God's approval" (GNT)
"maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity)" (AMP)
dokimē (Greek) = "proof", "tried character"

5.3-5 suffering -> endurance -> character -> hope -> non-disappointment. Logically, this says that suffering does not disappoint us. How can you explain that to a teenager whose best friend died by suicide? To an alcoholic who relapsed for the umpteenth time?

5.5 *disappoint us* lit "put us to shame" or "make us ashamed". Now? At the eschaton?

5.5 How do you experience *God's love (which) has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit*? How would you describe it to someone who isn't sure this has happened to them?

5.1-5 Where are you in this passage? Your parishioners?

John 16:12-15 (NRSV)

[Jesus said,] ¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Notes, Observations, Thought Questions

Context: This is part of the “Farewell Discourse” in John’s “Last Supper”. This portion is the last piece of a segment on the “Advocate”, ie, Holy Spirit, starting in Jn 15.26.

16.12-13 We cannot bear some things without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What might some of these “things that are to come” be?

16.13 *will speak whatever he hears* Who will the Spirit hear this from? Father? Son? How does it matter?