

Worship Service for May 30th: Trinity Sunday - 1st Sunday after Pentecost

- **Old Testament:** Isaiah 6:1-8
- **New Testament:** John 3:1-17; Romans 8:12-17
- **Psalms:** Psalm 29

Announcements:

- Welcome to our worship service! We're glad you are reading. We pray that God's blessings and peace will be with you all now and forever! Amen.

Sermon Title: The Holy Spirit Bears Witness to our Sonship!

Last week we celebrated Pentecost Day and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples causing them to speak in strange tongues. We also learned how the outpouring of the Holy Spirit led to great revival in Jerusalem. Today, we are celebrating Trinity Sunday. Trinity is the central affirmation about God as three persons in one Godhead - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada affirms there is one true God whom to know is life eternal, whom to serve is joy and peace. We believe that God is the creator of the universe, and that the entire universe testifies to His majesty and power. God came to us through Jesus Christ His Son bringing salvation through a new covenant that entered by faith. After the ascension, God now comes to us through the Holy Spirit, God present in the world, and Guide to the church. The Presbyterian Church in Canada therefore professes their believe in one God, eternal Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one and one in three, equal in power and glory. God is the Father to whom we come, the Son through whom we come, the Spirit by whom we come.

When we baptize, we baptize in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit signifying that baptism connects us to the fullness of God. God as trinity is distinct yet unified and interactive.

God is our loving Creator, but His work doesn't end at the beginning of creation. He continues to work in us every day of our lives. He keeps caring for us and loving us and creating newness in us, making a way when there seems to be no way. God keeps caring, keeps reaching out to us in active love, constantly watching over us in powerful providential care.

God is also our redeeming, loving Saviour Jesus Christ who gave His life a ransom for our souls. God came down to us and lived with us, making Himself unavoidably present, relational and available. He ministered to us as a human that we could relate to, died on the cross, was resurrected and ascended into heaven. God was among us as Immanuel.

Today, God is present with us through the Holy Spirit, God in us and with us, empowering us to do those things that we cannot do on our own.

“The Holy Spirit chiefly by the effects in us of the Spirit as “the cause of all holiness in us; enlightening our understandings, rectifying our wills and affections, renewing our natures, uniting...assuring...leading...purifying and sanctifying” us to “full and eternal enjoyment of God.” In God the Son we have God’s atoning and reconciling work for us. In God the Holy Spirit we have God’s sanctifying and redeeming work in us, now, here. All three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are aspects of, characteristics of, the truth about the identity and being of the one God who reaches out to us in three ways (William H. Willimon).”

After taking time to give us some vivid explanation of the trinity, we are hopefully now aware of the place of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our Christian lives today. Our passage tells us that as Christians we have been adopted into sonship through Jesus’ redemption. We have become children of God and the Holy Spirit in us bears witness to us of that adoption into the family of God.

In the Roman empire in Jesus’ time, adoption didn’t come easy and it was not taken lightly at all. During the period of the early Christian church, the Romans had what was referred to as the *patria potestas*. This was the father’s power over his family, his absolute disposal and control of his family. In the early days this was in fact the power of life and death. No matter how old a Roman child was, they were always under the authority of their father.

The consequences of adoption were quite serious. It was not just about the father having authority over the child, but that the child gained all the legitimate rights of a member of their new family. They became heir to their father’s estate and nothing or no one could affect those rights. The old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out and all their debts were cancelled. They were now regarded as a new person entering a new life and their past had nothing to do with their new

life. According to the law, he was absolutely and undisputedly the child of his father.

When we trace Roman history, we find an evidence of the power of adoption when Claudius the Roman emperor adopted Nero in order for him to become his successor. Claudius had a blood daughter Octavia whom Nero wanted to marry. However, in the sight of the law they were brother and sister and in order for them to marry, the Roman senate had to pass a special legislation.

The apostle Paul was using this to teach the Roman Christians what it means to be adopted in Christ through redemption. As God's adopted children, God has authority over us as His children and we have the privileges of sonship. Through the blood of Jesus, all our debts (sins) have been cancelled and we have a new life in Christ and our past has nothing to do with that life.

Our passage today also reminds us that the Spirit witnesses to our spirit that we really are children of God and no longer have to be slaves to fear because we can now cry out to our 'Abba, Father.' During the Roman adoption process, the parties involved had to have at least seven witnesses. These witnesses would stand up for the adopted in case any dispute arose in the future to attest that their adoption was indeed genuine.

Many times, as Christians, there are voices disputing our relationship with God. And because of that we find ourselves living lives that don't portray our 'sonship.' The apostle Paul calls it living in the flesh. As children of God, we have rights and duties as the family of God. We have been made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, meaning that we have the same inheritance as Christ. Christ had a duty, to die for our sins and he obeyed the Father and carried out his duty and was rewarded with God's glory.

As children of God, our obligation is not to the flesh but to the Spirit to put to death the misdeeds of the flesh and live righteous lives. Once we were in absolute control of our own sinful human nature; but God, in His infinite mercy and through the blood of His dear Son, brought us into His absolute possession. The life of the flesh, the old life has no more power or right over us because of our adoption. The pass is cancelled, our debts are wiped out and we now have to begin a new life with God and become heirs of the riches and glory of God the Father.

We cannot do this on our own. It is time for us to embrace the help of the third person in the trinity – the Holy Spirit. God in His amazing love and mercy took us who were lost, helpless, poverty-stricken, debt-laden sinners, even when we didn't deserve it and adopted us into His family. Our debts were cancelled, and we inherited God's glory. It is now time for us to live lives that reflect that glory in our words, thoughts and actions. May we embrace the help of the Holy Spirit as we represent God on earth as His children. Amen.

Prayer

Life-giving God, we gather in Your presence to offer You thanksgiving and praise for all that You have done for us. Through the life, death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we have been set free, free from the power of sin that leads to death, free to follow the leading of Your Holy Spirit, free to love You with all our heart and soul and strength, free to worship! To You alone, life-giving God, belongs all praise and honor and glory and blessing, now and to the end of time.

Abba, Father, we praise You! Through Your boundless grace and mercy, we have been set free. Not only that but, through Your Holy Spirit, we have been invited into Your family, adopted as Your own sons and daughters, children of God and made heirs of Your glory. And so, no matter what comes our way we live in confidence and hope, eagerly anticipating the day when all creation will be made new, and we will see You face to face.

O God, You are holy, and deep within us where our souls touch the ground, where our being meets your being, we are on holy ground and your holiness surrounds us and calls our name. Your holiness is your goodness and your generosity towards us. Like Isaiah the prophet, we stand in awe of Your glory, feeling tremendously small and polluted by our sin, and the sin of our society. Even so, You touch us with Your burning presence, and we are made clean and whole.

God, our Creator, You wait to meet us, to make us holy with your holiness, to make us loving with your love, to make us hopeful with your hope. Continue to build this household of faith into what You want us to be. Christ, our Savior, lead us to do as You will. Holy Spirit, our Power, strengthen us for the work of the Kingdom, a worship and a service which is ours today as well as tomorrow. Blessed Trinity, fill this place and these people with Your presence. For yours is the Power, and the Salvation, and the Creation, now and always.

In your presence we bow our heads in shame where we have failed others, failed ourselves and failed you. Touch us with the tenderness of your forgiveness. In your presence we breathe new life when we dare to be still, to be centred, to be whole, to be holy. Set us free to be holy. Set us free to be for ourselves a place where sacredness is joy and peace. And let us be a sacred space for others and make sacredness for them.

Dwell in us as in a holy temple, that we may know stillness and that we may sense the fragrance of your love and bring that fragrance to where life is a stench and decay and stale, within ourselves and within our world.

We thank you, loving God, for the vulnerable yet wonderful gift of life. To be alive and to know it is an unspeakable honour. We thank you, that from start to finish our life is precious in your sight. We thank You, loving God, that those who believe in Christ Jesus have already passed from death to life and are even now fed with the bread of heaven. May we ever proclaim the hope we have to those who despair, that your light shines in the darkness of our world.

We pray for all those who are mourning the death of a loved one. Comfort them in the knowledge that Jesus has won a victory over death, so that everyone who dies in Christ may have eternal life. Keep us from fearing death, but at times of doubt, help us put our faith in Jesus.

We pray for hospices and for people who work with the dying. Keep them strong and give them peace to do their difficult work with dignity and sensitivity. We pray for all those people who work with alcoholics and drug addicts. Use them to make a difference to people's lives, and to help them start their life anew. We pray for our fishermen that you would continue to protect them at sea.

Loving God, whose Spirit gave breath to the valley of dry bones, whose touch healed the lame and whose word raised the dead, hear our prayers today for those who are afflicted by sorrow and illness, by injustice and by despair, or by fear and weakness. Breath into their hearts, touch their bodies, speak their names, and bring new life to them.

To you, Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, belongs all glory, honour and worship, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Hear us now as we pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

As you go from here, remember this: the same Spirit of God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, also lives in you, breathing new life and freedom into your hearts and minds. So go from here with joy and confidence, knowing that God is at work within you. Amen.