

Our Trinitarian Baptismal Faith

Matthew 28:16-20

Introduction

The doctrine of the Trinity has been called the basic doctrine of the church for the last two thousand years. The **Apostles' Creed** and **Nicene Creed** are Trinitarian in nature, while half of the **Athanasian Creed** defends it. As for the Lutheran Church, the Trinity is dealt with in the First Article of the **Augsburg Confession**, the **Apology**, and the **Smalcald Articles**. But we aren't here today to defend or explain a doctrine. We are here to celebrate a reality.

Does It Make a Difference?

I read about a Lutheran professor at an Evangelical school who asked the question of his students, "If there were no doctrine of the Trinity, how would it affect your worship, or how you live?" Today, we look at the effect the Trinity has on our worship and life.

Worship

For someone in a non-liturgical church, the Trinity may not have much effect on their worship. But look at how much the Trinity is called upon or confessed in our worship. Our service begins with a Trinitarian **Invocation**. The pronouncement of **Absolution** is in the name of the Trinity. The **Gloria Patri** in the **Introit** is Trinitarian. The **Gloria in Excelsis** confesses the Trinity. The **Creed** is Trinitarian. Our **prayers** are all addressed to the Trinity. The **Nunc Dimittis** is Trinitarian. Since so much of our worship is confessing, celebrating, or invoking the Trinity, we can see how the Trinity affects our worship.

Our Life – Baptized in the Trinity

Last week we talked about the Holy Spirit and how He enters our life through Baptism and works faith in us through the Word. But the Word added to the water of Baptism is, "*I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"

We Receive His Name

Baptized in His name means we receive His name. Receiving His name means receiving His identity. We become children of God. He adopts us as His own. We belong to Him.

A God of Love

We know that God is a God of love. In fact, St. John says in his first epistle, *God is love (1 John 4:8)*. We also know that God is eternal. This means He existed before there was anything or anyone else. Love demands an object. Who was God's object of love before He created? If God is not triune, His only object of love would have been Himself. Psychologists have a word for that – Narcissism, named for the Greek myth of Narcissus, a man so beautiful, he fell in love with his own reflection in a pond. He was so mesmerized by it that he wasted away there and became the flower we know by the same name. A God in love with Himself would never have created, let alone cared for His creation. But God's love exists, and has always existed, in community. Because we have His name, He invites us to share in that community, the dance of the Trinity. We can enjoy the fellowship of God and one another because God is Trinity.

Benefits of Baptism

The **Catechism** says: *[Baptism] works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare* (**Small Catechism: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Part Two**). All this was accomplished by Christ through His death and resurrection. So, while this may all look to be the work of the Son, the Father in His love sent His only Son, and the Holy Spirit communicates these blessings to us by working faith in us through the Word of God.

The Lord's Supper

In Holy Communion the Father gives us the body and blood of the Son, while the Holy Spirit strengthens the faith that He has worked in us. This is why we sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, blessed Trinity!" That is our **TRINITARIAN BAPTISMAL FAITH**.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
