Text: Trinity Sunday

**Introduction**

Trinity Sunday is a strange day. Most special days on the Church calendar are there because of some specific action in the life of Christ or in the life of the church. There might be some doctrine connected with the action, but the doctrine derives from the action. The doctrine of justification is the result of the passion of Jesus. The doctrine of the incarnation is the attempt to grasp the reality of Christmas. But Trinity Sunday is about the doctrine first. The doctrine of the Trinity is the starting point of how the church lives in this world.

My starting point today is a series of conversations I’ve had. I usually avoid that starting point for two reasons. The first, I just hate navel gazing or special pleading. As if my personal experience was so deep that I get to afflict you guys with it for 10 mins. The second is any possible confusion that I’d take and run with private things inappropriately. These conversations were public, not from the confessional. I’m pretty sure they were not with anyone in the congregation. The wonders of social media. As for the special pleading, I think I can universalize it. Ok, enough throat clearing.

All of the conversations circled around two ideas: the goodness of creation and the real evil of the fall. All of these conversations would start with some type of assertion like, “that’s the way God made them, it would be unjust to hold them accountable.” At the start of Pride month, you know what these conversations started with. But I want to turn to a personal experience here. You guys might not have seen it, and at 51 maybe I’m mellowing, but I’ve always had a temper. And I’m not just talking about snit fits, but you could reach for the terms rage or wrath. As a high school sports player, I got kicked out of my share of games on technical fouls. Embarrassing to admit, but my kids have seen this occasionally. And as far as I can determine, this just is the way I am. I didn’t learn it from my parents who are both rather gentle. I didn’t teach it to myself, because my mother used to tell stories of the horrors of trying to feed baby me and the fits that I’d pitch. And then sometime in a Sunday school class I remember hearing Jesus being quoted as saying, “I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:22 ESV)” As someone who had called his brother a fool many times, that verse struck. And at the same time the idea that it was completely unfair came. This temper was part of who I was. Surely the occasional outburst was not enough to be liable to the fires of hell.

Now there are lots of things that actually might go the same way. Alcoholism seems to have a genetic component. We all seem to want more than we have. Whether you want to blame genetics or nature or God himself, there are lots of things that we call vice or sin that seem to be natural. That is our situation under the law.

**The Goodness of Creation/Providence**

And the first way to try and wiggle out of it is usually to deny the goodness of God’s creation. God, you messed up. You didn’t make things right. You didn’t make me right. It’s the pot yelling back at the potter. The slightly less radical version of that is: God, you didn’t give me enough. The scarcity of something you didn’t provide is what caused this. Maybe you made ok, but your neglect of your creation let it, let me, sour.

When we talk about the First Person of the Trinity – God the Father – we are usually talking about creation. And that’s the Old Testament reading for today. And the repeated refrain of creation is that “God saw this is was good.” That line appears six times, and then the seventh, in a crowing way, God looks at everything and “behold, it was very good” – tov mahod – power and greatness and might and weight and everything that might add packed into our word very. Very Good.

However the potter made us, it is very good. And while the work of creation might have been done. The Sun and the moon that ruled the day and the night continued in their paces. Everything thing that was made was sustained. I hope you’ve heard it before but G. K. Chesterton tells a great story. Something like. We all know that when we finish a story to a child they say “do it again.” And we do. And they say “do it again.” With my last one it was it was Curious George makes pancakes. I hate that story. We grown-ups get tired. But every morning God says “do it again.” And every evening, “do it again.” And He has never tired of making anything “do it again.” We’ve sinned and grown old, and Our Father is younger that we.

The Christian story of the Father is everything is created good and He still sustains it all. His providence is more than enough. The pot has no right to say anything to the potter.

**The Evil of Sin**

If we can’t reject the goodness of creation or the providence of God, we move on to the trouble with the fall. Whatever Adam and Eve did that messed things up, you can’t hold that against me. I wasn’t there. And because creation has gone wrong, you can’t hold me responsible for what is now my nature.

We call this original sin. All mankind was in Adam and Eve and all have inherited it. And how it shows up is in the fancy world concupiscence. That is simply the desire to actively sin. The Reformers asked the question is concupiscence itself sin? You can find this in the Augsburg Confession article 2. And their answer is emphatic, “this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.”

Not only is the actual action of calling my child an idiot sin, the outworking of my anger. The desire to call my child an idiot is sin.

And we have no excuse.

Our second reading from Acts today. “This Jesus…you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.” Peter is preaching on Pentecost. The crowds of the Passover and passion are long gone. These are new ones. They had nothing to do with this. “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom you crucified.”

Our rejection of the potter. Our rejection of responsibility. It was our sinful desires that gave power to lawless men. Our desire for lawlessness. Crucified the Lord of Glory.

We have no excuse.

Every thought of our natural hearts is sinful, and that is our born nature. We don’t get to exclude our preferred sins. We don’t get to carve ourselves out. And it is not unjust to hold us accountable. It is perfectly just that I am liable to the fires of hell for my temper.

**The Grace of Christ**

What then are we to do? If that is truly the case, there is nothing we can do. We are all lost.

And that is a good conclusion. That is the human experience. I really really want to do this bad thing. And I want to blame God and get away with it. Or maybe the very pious of us want some way to earn it. Surely there must be something I can do.

I don’t know why they cut it off, but that is the response to Peter’s sermon by those Pentecost crowds. “Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37 ESV)”

And Peter’s response is the eternal proclamation of the church. If you don’t hear this, you haven’t heard the gospel. “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38 ESV)”

Repent. Yes, God has made me good and provides everything I need. Yes, the desires of my flesh are sinful and deserving of death.

Be baptized, be born again, receive the forgiveness of sins, accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. Have faith that this Jesus, whom the Father has made Lord and Christ, is for you. “The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." (Acts 2:39 ESV)”

There is nothing that you can do, the victory has been won by Jesus and the results are give to you through the Spirit.

**Conclusion**

But I’m probably going to sin again?

Repent and believe that the victory has been given to you.

But I’ll continue.

It’s forgiven

But I already want.

Forgiven, go and sin no more.

Yes, we should try and mortify the flesh. Yes, every day we drown the old adam and all the new man to arise. And that fight will not stop as long as we are in this flesh.

But the victory is won. This flesh will fail, yet we shall rise. Because Christ is risen.