

June 16, 2019

## Good Enough Done Enough

Today, we're celebrating Trinity Sunday. That should be clear by now. I have spent a better part of 37 years avoiding preaching on the Trinity. I thought early in the week that maybe it's about time that I should try to tackle the doctrine of the Trinity. So for the first few days, I was working on that and had come up with some things I wanted to say about God the father, some things I wanted to say about God the son, and some things I wanted to say about the Holy Spirit and the unity of the three. And I realized I was going to be preaching for about 45 minutes.

And I thought do I really want to be standing here all alone at the end of the sermon? So, I got rid of those thoughts. If you want to see them, I'll write them in a book someday, and you can see them then. And I looked at the gospel reading, and the gospel, if it sounds familiar, we've had parts of it for like three Sundays over the last four or five. About Jesus telling his disciples that he was not going to leave them comfortless, that he would be sending the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth, that they would teach them. And I preached on that, at least it feels to me extensively over the last few weeks. And I thought, if I go there again, I might be standing here alone at the end of sermon.

So I decided the epistle was where we really needed to look, where I really needed to look, because in the years that I've served as a priest, as an ordained minister in the Episcopal church, the one consistent thing that I have received from parishioners is a fear that they're not doing well enough. The question I get most often is do I really ... have I done enough to warrant salvation? Now, it comes in different phraseology, but that's where it boils down to. I don't know that I'm good enough. I'm not sure that I've done enough. I'm not sure that I've been able to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior well enough to believe that I am eligible for salvation, that I am eligible for the kingdom of heaven.

And as I have gotten older and maybe a little bit more mature, I've decided that is just the wrong question. We need to stop asking the question. It's not about whether you are good enough to receive salvation. The fact of the matter is you have received salvation. It is a gift. It's yours. Accept it. Let it be a part of who you are. Let it be a part of who you are becoming. Because what Paul is saying in that little bit of his letter to the Romans is all about not being afraid. It's about understanding that what Jesus Christ has done is for everyone.

And if you in faith accept the gift of salvation that was established through his life, death, and resurrection, then you are, as Paul puts it, at peace with God. You should be at peace with God because it is the gift given. You need to know and understand and accept--and this is all the hard part to accept it--that God loves you so much that he joined with humanity in Jesus Christ, went through a life like each of us lives, with every temptation that we have, and that he did that in order to embrace all of humanity, did

that in order to show God's great love for all of humanity. And when I say all, I'm not talking about just all the people that were there at the time, all of humanity, before, during, after the time of Jesus.

The love of God is that great and overwhelming, and every bit of that love that God had for those who came before, God has for you and will have for those who will come after. And what Jesus did was not to come and say okay, folks, I'm going to go through this one more time. I'm going to give you the laws. I'm going to give you all the instructions that God has given to the people that we have a record of through the Old Testament, and then this time, maybe you'll get it right. That's not the purpose of Jesus. The purpose of Jesus is to say, folks, we now know that you can't do this on your own. You had the rules, you had the laws, you had the encouragement, you had the prophets. You couldn't do it.

We knew that. We, the trinity. God knew that. What God is doing now is saying okay, relax. Stop thinking you can accomplish it on your own. Stop thinking that you can live a life of righteousness before God. We can't do it, never could, can't now, never will. That would indicate we're lost, except for what Jesus does. He goes through, and he teaches, and he tries to get everybody an idea that what I'm doing, I'm doing for you. I want you to know that God loves you. I want you to know that God doesn't want to punish you. He does want you to understand that you are sinful creatures. There is still that thing about repentance. But the promise of forgiveness. And that promise of forgiveness is fulfilled when Jesus goes through the passion, goes through death and the cross, and comes out alive again.

Now the promise of that life is given to everyone. He did this for everybody, those who came before, those who were there then, everyone who will come after. And the purpose is so that we don't live in fear anymore, that we don't let this idea of not being good enough keep us from becoming who God has called us to be. It's not about the rules. It's about the love. It's not about being good enough to get the invitation or getting the gift offer. It's about having the gift of life offered and allowing it to change your life, to no longer worry about trying to be obligated to do this or to do that. It's about hearing that God loves you so much, that all this took place, so that you could have life and not worry about death, so that you could have life, and in gratitude for the salvation that you have already received, because if your faith in the gospel, in Jesus Christ, that now, you simply live a life of gratitude, a life where the very presence of God in you, within you, begins to change how you see the world, begins to change how you see yourself, begins to change how you see one another.

And it's not that immediately, you're perfect. It's not that you will eventually get to perfection. It's God saying, I love you so much that in spite of the flaws, you are my child, and I love you, and I care for you, I want you to be with me now and always, and I want you to experience life, and I want you to experience joyfully. I want you to be able to see the people around you and embrace them for not only who they are, but who they can become. I want you to share this glorious joy of being with God and God being with you, and live your life that way, in peace with God, to allow what you have received

to change who you are becoming, to find that path that leads you to a joy and happiness, where forgiveness that you have received becomes that forgiveness that you gave, that the love that you have received becomes the love that you share with others, because you know you've been given this gift. You know that the people around you have been offered this gift, whether they have received it, accepted it or not.

It's still offered. And you can be the voice of one to share that good news. Do you know that God loves you so much that he gave his only son? Came into the world, embraced humanity so much, became entwined with humanity to go through life to redeem it so that you can have salvation, so that you don't have to worry about what comes after anymore. All you must do is accept that gracious gift of God, that gift of life, that gift of salvation. You don't have to take a test before you receive it. And as you receive it, all you must do is let it lead you on.

Let it help you become the very things that you know that you want to embrace anyway. Kindness, joyfulness, love, peace, to live without fear. That's what we're about. So, the next time you start worrying, have I done enough, you don't need to do enough. What needs to be done has been done for you. That's why we have a savior. That's why we don't have one more leader who says, if you could only follow the rules better, then you'll be okay. You have the savior that says, despite your flaws--and we all have them. Every person that God chose to do important things in the scriptures were flawed people. They did things that they shouldn't have done. They didn't do some of the things they should have done. Sounds familiar because we are those people. That's all God must work with.

And he says, you're enough. I made you this way so that you could experience love. I made you this way so that you could experience loss. I made you this way so that you could experience the salvation that only God can give. Now that you've received it, now that in faith, you have said, I believe, and will follow, go forward in peace, assured of the love of God, assured of your place in God's kingdom, assured that what Jesus has done for others, that Jesus has done for you.

Gregory Hein – Rector