
**THE HOLY TRINITY CONTINUES TO BLESS US WITH THE GIFTS OF
FORGIVENESS, LIFE, AND SALVATION****Sermon for Trinity Sunday, 2022****Acts 2:14a, 22-36**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is our Second Reading from before, Acts 2:14a, 22-36: **Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ...** ²² **“Men of Israel, listen to these words! Jesus of Nazareth was a Man whom God commended to you, as you yourselves know, by miracles, wonders and miraculous signs, which God worked among you through Him. ²³ This Man was handed over to you by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the hands of wicked men, nailed Him to a cross and put Him to death. ²⁴ Nevertheless, God raised Him and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for death to hold Him. ²⁵ For David says about Him: ‘I have continually been foreseeing the Lord before Me. For He is at My right hand, that I may not be shaken. ²⁶ For this reason My heart is glad, and My tongue rejoices; yes, even My body will rest in hope. ²⁷ For You will not abandon My soul to Hades or allow Your Holy One to see decay. ²⁸ You have made the paths of life known to Me. You will fill Me with joy through Your presence.’ ²⁹ Brethren, I can tell you frankly that our ancestor David died and was buried, and his grave is with us to this day. ³⁰ Therefore, because David was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him by an oath to cause one of his descendants to sit on his throne, ³¹ he saw what would come and said concerning the resurrection of the Christ that He was not abandoned to the grave and that His body did not experience decay. ³² This One, Jesus, God has raised, and of that fact we are all witnesses.**

³³ **“Therefore, after He has been lifted up by God’s right hand and has received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this, which you both see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who went up to heaven, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.””**

³⁶ **“Therefore, all the people of Israel should know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, Lord and Christ!”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today is the Feast of the Holy Trinity. On this day, we sing hymns emphasising the Trinitarian nature of the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. On this day, we confess the Athanasian Creed, which goes into the most detail on the relationship of the three persons in the Trinity. Today we are not celebrating some dry doctrine with no connection to life. No, we are celebrating a living reality - the reality of who God is, as He is, as He has acted to save us and give us life, and as He has revealed Himself to us in Holy Scripture. Today we are confessing the truth of the Holy Trinity, over against all heretics that have arisen in history, from the Arians of the fourth century to the Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses of our day. The living reality of the triune God and the true and saving doctrine concerning the same - that's why we put aside this Sunday to celebrate the festival of the Holy Trinity.

Now there is much about the mystery of the Holy Trinity that is hard for us to understand. How can there be three Persons and yet only one God? How can this triune God have always been, uncreated, from eternity? I suppose that if we could fully understand God, we would have to be God!¹

But while there is much that remains hidden to us mortal creatures, there is also much that has been revealed, and that is what our focus must be on. God wants us to know Him in a living, vital relationship and to know what we need to know about Him to be saved, and that's where our Scripture readings come in today.

Our text, the Second Reading from before, from Acts chapter 2, picks up where our reading from last week left off. It's Peter's Pentecost sermon. Last week we heard the first part of Peter's sermon. Now, today we continue with the main part of that sermon. Today we hear in more detail the life-giving message of the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, let's go.

Peter has stood up and is preaching to the crowd that has gathered in Jerusalem. God has arranged it that all these people would be there that day. They were all there, in and around the temple area, when God caused there to be a loud sound, "*a sound like a violent blast of wind*," that had caught their attention. They then heard Christians speaking of the mighty works of God in foreign languages. That was a

¹ Isaiah 44:7

sign that God was pouring out His Spirit to get the Good News to all nations so that “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*” (Acts 2:21).

Now Peter goes on from there and we notice throughout how Peter weaves his message around the work of the three persons of the Trinity to save us. He begins: **“Men of Israel, listen to these words! Jesus of Nazareth was a Man whom God commended to you, as you yourselves know, by miracles, wonders and miraculous signs, which God worked among you through Him. ²³ This Man was handed over to you by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the hands of wicked men, nailed Him to a cross and put Him to death.”**

Peter’s starting point was to point directly to *Jesus of Nazareth*. Which is as it should be. We only come to know God as He is through Jesus Christ. Remember how Jesus Himself had said, “*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (John 14:6).

Surely there could be no doubt that the people in this crowd would have remembered this man Jesus of Nazareth. They were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. It was only seven weeks earlier, again in Jerusalem, at the time of the Passover festival, that many of these same Jewish pilgrims would have witnessed Jesus of Nazareth being sentenced to death by crucifixion. In fact, many of the people in this Pentecost crowd would have been among those calling for Jesus’ crucifixion, and everyone would have heard of this man, Jesus of Nazareth. He was the talk of the town at the time of the Passover, and the echoes were still reverberating seven weeks later.

The “**miracles, wonders and miraculous signs**” Jesus performed during His ministry had spread far and wide – even in a world without social media where news is instant! It should also have been clearly known and self-evident that this Jesus was a Man sent by God. He could not do the works He had performed *unless God were with Him*. Yet, Jesus’ enemies, out of jealousy and spite, had whipped up a mob to call for His death. The people in this Pentecost crowd, many of them, had gone along with that.

Peter lets them know it: “This Jesus,” he says, **“you, with the hands of wicked men, nailed to a cross and put Him to death.”** Talk about laying a guilt trip on them! Talk about speaking a hard word to your audience! That’s what Peter is doing. He’s showing unrestrained courage by speaking this hard, condemning word to his audience. This was a very dangerous thing he was doing. The crowd could have turned on him, but Peter needed to do this, to *convict* his listeners of their sin and wilful ignorance and unbelief so that they would know they had blown it with regard

to God. Pastors still today need to preach the Law to their hearers so that people will then be ready to hear and receive the Gospel.

Let's look at ourselves in the light of Peter's words – of God's Word. Do we realise how we have blown it with regard to God? Are we aware of our own sin and troubled by it? Often, we speak of the busyness of our lives, how there is not enough hours in the day to get everything done. We run around like chooks with our heads cut off! In all this busyness, how much time do we give to stop and remember Jesus in our daily living? Do we even bother? Do we think about Jesus and His saving work every day? Do we set aside not just a couple hours of a Sunday to thank and praise Him, but some time *every day* to thank Him, or do we think that somehow by our own strength and righteousness, we shall prevail! We need to know our need for the Saviour God has provided. We need Him every day. We need to be stripped of our righteousness in order to receive His.

Well, even though those Pentecost hearers had called for Jesus' crucifixion and blown it big-time, even so, God was working good in spite of, and even through, their evil. Peter told them that this Jesus was, in fact, **“handed over to (them) by God's set plan and foreknowledge.”** *“You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good”* is what Peter was saying. God was working out His plan and purpose by Jesus being delivered up unto death. There was no other way for mankind to be saved, other than by the sacrificial death of God's own Son, Jesus Christ. The Father had sent His Son into the world, in the flesh, to do just this: ***to carry the load of our sins to the cross.*** By the shedding of His blood for us, in our place, Jesus has purchased forgiveness and righteousness and redemption for us poor sinners.

This was the way, the only way, it could happen. We were too blind and ignorant and sin-bound to work our way out of the mess we had gotten ourselves into. Only God could save us. And He has! This is God's perfect and eternal plan for us, from before the foundation of the world: that the Father would send the Son to be our Saviour. And it happened through Jesus' death on the cross. As John writes, *“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7).

But the story doesn't end there. Peter continues: **“God raised Him and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for death to hold Him.”** Peter is speaking of the resurrection of Christ on Easter Day. God the Father raised up His Son, the Son having accomplished the mission on which the Father had sent Him. Mission accomplished! We remember the words the Father spoke to His Son at His baptism, *“This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”* (Matt. 3:17). As the Father's beloved Son, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness.

Peter quotes from Psalm 16, to show that this resurrection of the Messiah was even predicted in Scripture. **“For this reason My heart is glad, and My tongue rejoices; yes, even My body will rest in hope. ²⁷ For You will not abandon My soul to Hades or allow Your Holy One to see decay.”** This is Christ speaking. But dear friends, we who have been joined to Jesus in baptism and in faith, this is us speaking, too! Yes, unlike Christ’s body, that did not see decay, our bodies will return to dust, nevertheless, we shall share in Jesus’ resurrection victory! God will raise us up, bodily, with a glorified body, on the Last Day! Every one of us can join with David in proclaiming, **“You have made the paths of life known to Me. You will fill Me with joy through Your presence.”**

Then, from here, Peter goes on to explain the present situation: **“Therefore, after He has been lifted up by God’s right hand and has received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this, which you both see and hear.”** Notice all three persons of the Trinity here, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God the Father has raised Jesus up. Christ has been seated at the right hand of the Father and has poured out the Holy Spirit on the church. That is still happening today. Christ now is seated at the Father’s right hand, ruling all things for the good of the church. The Holy Spirit now continues to empower the preaching of the church so that more and more people will hear the Good News and believe and be saved.

Dear friends, this is for you, and it is for me! We are on the receiving end of God’s good gifts. We who have been baptised *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* are the beneficiaries of His goodness. God, the one true God, the triune God - our God, has blessed us beyond measure. In spite of our sins, in the midst of our sorrows and confusions, the Holy Trinity is continuing to bless us with the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. We have peace for our consciences, and hope in the face of our struggles - the living God is supplying us with all we need for this life and the next. Truly we are already living members of God’s household and shall continue to *“dwell in the house of the Lord forever”* (Psalm 23:6). Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRINITY SUNDAY

We praise You, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for You are from everlasting to everlasting. We adore You as the Lord of all, clothed with majesty and honour. We sing Your praise, and humbly bring You our prayers.

We thank You for the truth by which we have come to know You, and for the mercy by which we have come to love You. We thank You for the ability and privilege to praise You, the one, true, eternal, immortal, invisible God in whom we live, move, and exist.

We bless You, heavenly Father, that the universe that you have made is good and wonderful, and that the things that You have made reveal Your power and wisdom.

We worship You, O Christ, only Son of the Father. For when You were lifted up on the cross You drew all people to Yourself, so that whoever believes in You might not die, but have eternal life. We praise You that, at the right hand of the Father, You govern all things for the benefit of Your church. Continue to intercede with the Father for us, Your people.

We praise You, O Holy Spirit that You have called us by the Gospel, and have led us to the saving truth of Jesus the Son. We praise You for gathering us into Your church and making us holy by Your grace. We thank You for making us alive in Christ by Baptism and faith, and for renewing our hearts and lives.

Gracious God, continue to open to us Your Holy Scriptures, that we may grow in our understanding of Your will, serve You more acceptably, and love and obey You better. Give us an ever clearer view of Jesus our Saviour, so that we may rejoice in Your love and mercy more and more, and always trust You completely for everything.

Live in Your Church, O Lord, and make people and pastors eager to fulfil their roles in Your kingdom. Cleanse Your church from all error, weakness, strife, and disobedience. Make us strong in faith and good works, and give us a strong hope in all Your rich promises.

Loving Lord, You have made us Your own; keep us close to You all our days. Give us unceasing joy in Christ's forgiveness and salvation, and confirm us in the new life of the Spirit, until that day dawns, when Your kingdom will come in all its fullness.

Then grant that we may see You face to face, and perfectly love and praise You, our gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the ages to come. Amen.

THE HOLY TRINITY

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

¹ Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? ² Wisdom takes her stand on the top of the high ground beside the road, where the paths cross, ³ beside the gates in front of the city. At the entrance to the gateway wisdom calls aloud: ⁴ “Men, I am calling to you and raising My voice to the descendants of Adam: ... ²² “The LORD had possessed Me at the beginning of His way, from of old, before any of His deeds. ²³ I have been poured forth from eternity, from the first, before the earliest times of the earth. ²⁴ I was given birth when there were no ocean-depths, when there were no springs that were made glorious by water. ²⁵ I was given birth before the mountains had been firmly set and before there were hills, ²⁶ before He had made the earth, the open fields or the first dust of the world. ²⁷ I was there when He set up the heavens. When He traced a horizon on the surface of the deep, ²⁸ when He made the clouds firm above, when the fountains of the deep became strong, ²⁹ when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside Him as the Craftsman. I was also His delight every day, always rejoicing in His

presence, ³¹ rejoicing in His inhabitable world and delighting in human beings.”

Acts 2:14a, 22-36

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ... ²² “Men of Israel, listen to these words! Jesus of Nazareth was a Man whom God commended to you, as you yourselves know, by miracles, wonders and miraculous signs, which God worked among you through Him. ²³ This Man was handed over to you by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the hands of wicked men, nailed Him to a cross and put Him to death. ²⁴ Nevertheless, God raised Him and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for death to hold Him. ²⁵ For David says about Him: ‘I have continually been foreseeing the Lord before Me. For He is at My right hand, that I may not be shaken. ²⁶ For this reason My heart is glad, and My tongue rejoices; yes, even My body will rest in hope. ²⁷ For You will not abandon My soul to Hades or allow Your Holy One to see decay. ²⁸ You have made the paths of life known to Me. You will fill Me with joy through Your presence.’ ²⁹ Brethren, I can tell you frankly that our ancestor David died and was buried, and his grave is with

us to this day.³⁰ Therefore, because David was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him by an oath to cause one of his descendants to sit on his throne,³¹ he saw what would come and said concerning the resurrection of the Christ that He was not abandoned to the grave and that His body did not experience decay.³² This One, Jesus, God has raised, and of that fact we are all witnesses.

³³ “Therefore, after He has been lifted up by God’s right hand and has received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this, which you both see and hear.³⁴ For it was not David who went up to heaven, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand,³⁵ until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”’”

³⁶ “Therefore, all the people of Israel should know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, Lord and Christ!”

John 8:48-59

⁴⁸ The Jews answered Him, “Are we not right when we say that You are a Samaritan and that You have a demon?”

⁴⁹ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon but am honouring My Father,

and you are dishonouring Me.⁵⁰ I am also not trying to glorify Myself. There is One who wants Me to have glory and He is the Judge.⁵¹ Truly, truly, I tell you, if anyone keeps My Word, he will certainly never see death.”

⁵² Then the Jews told Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets, but You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will certainly never taste death.’⁵³ Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham was? He died, and the prophets died. Whom are You making Yourself?”

⁵⁴ Jesus said, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, He of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’⁵⁵ Yet you do not know Him, but I know Him. If I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you. Rather, I do know Him and keep His Word.⁵⁶ Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see My day, saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old and have You seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸ Jesus told them, “Truly, truly, I tell you, before Abraham came into being, I am.”

⁵⁹ Therefore, they took up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple.