

NAME DAY

“Name Day”

The Holy Trinity
5:30 p.m. Saturday, May 16, 2016
The Reverend John H. Brock
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

So my younger son is on choir tour right now. School is out for the year, and Juniata College choir is on tour in Hungary & Romania He texted me this morning to say they are in Budapest today (life can be pretty tough when you're 19). It seems like a cool thing. It's not necessarily a place I've been wishing I could go, although it sounds like he's enjoying being there.

It's got a bit of a weird name to our western ears: Budapest. According that epitome of knowledge on internet, *Wikipedia*, we don't know exactly where the name Budapest came from. the best guesses are that it is a combination of the city names *Buda* and *Pest*. Buda refers to the western part of the city (the right side of the Danube, when facing north) and Pest refers to the eastern side.

Buda may be derived from King Bleda, who was active in the area. Or, it may be a derivative of the Slavic word *voda*, which means water, because the current day Budapest was built upon the ancient ruins of an old Roman Empire city Aquincum (aqua being Latin for water, and the Danube River bisects the city).

Whatever the origins of the name, it's Exotic and Foreign sounding, and brings up mental images of some far away and fantastical place - or at least in my mind, anyway.

Names can do that: Conjure up mental images, that may or may not hold true with everyone. I do think that's true for our name, our congregation name: Trinity. Because we're named for a being, as a congregation; yet we as a congregation are named after a concept, an understanding, a belief of our faith: Trinity.

Our gospel lesson comes from the after-dinner speech that Jesus gives. They've celebrated the Passover; Jesus washed the feet of the disciples; He's explained to them that he will be betrayed, even that Peter will deny knowing him. Jesus has moved onto the part of his speech where he's hoping his followers will finally begin to comprehend what he's saying, but he's having very little luck. He's having little luck, in part, because he's talking about things that aren't easy to comprehend, namely, himself. God, the three in one. Trinity.

Scripture never talks about the Trinity as such. But throughout, God talks about God's

own self, and that's part of what is going on in our passage. Jesus talks about God the Father, and God the Spirit, and so, by extension God the Son. These are three different aspects of God, three different ways of relating to God, three ways of understanding God. But not, and this is the important part, three separate gods. One God; three persons. Together, we call that one God Trinity.

Here's a thing: trying to explain the Trinity is one of the more difficult things I have to do on a regular basis as a pastor. I can't explain the Trinity, at least, not in a way that makes sense to us. To me, God is greater than anything that I can imagine. IF that is who / what God is, then, *therefore*, God **has to be** beyond my human comprehension. Because if I **can** understand what / who God is, then either: my definition of God is incorrect, or; we're worshiping gods like the old Roman or Greek variety - in other words, just really powerful humans. And that is Not the God that I read about in scripture.

So what I think Jesus is trying to say in our passage tonight is, the Spirit brings truth, and is truth. The Spirit speaks to us. The Spirit speaks **truth** to us. The Spirit speaks on behalf of the Father. And since we, as believers, belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to the Father, therefore we belong to the Father.

More importantly, that by belonging to God the Father, God is with us, always. God is with us when things are going well. God is with us when things are going lousy. God is with us when we're healthy. God is with us when we're sick, and suffering, and in pain. Simply because we believe, simply because we belong to Christ, does not mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us.

We live in this imperfect world, where accidents happen; where people hate what is different; where illness strikes at any age; where the economy rises or falls in ways that most of us don't understand or can predict, so sometimes we have enough money, sometimes we barely get by, and sometimes we don't have enough to pay even the most basic and essential of bills. None of that means that God loves us any less, or is not with us.

Rather, I believe that in those lousy times, God is most definitely with us. And, personally, it doesn't matter to me if I really understand what the Trinity is, or how the Trinity works or what the name Trinity even means. What is important to me is, God loves me. God is with me, always. And that God forgives me.

That's what I think we need to take away from here this Trinity Sunday: we don't need to understand God in order to be loved and forgiven.

And isn't that a great thing?

Amen.

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