

# NAME DAY

## “Name Day”

The Holy Trinity  
8:15 and 11:00 a.m., Sunday, May 22, 2016  
The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8;  
Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

I was always jealous of my colleagues. So many of them went to churches that had great names, names that were usually associated with some sort of feast or festival of the church that they could always lift up, they could celebrate their name day. So if they were at Saint Paul's Lutheran Church when the date of the commemoration of Saint Paul came around they could have a big celebration with everybody in their congregation.

My home congregation was First English Lutheran Church. How do you celebrate that? Yeah, we were the first ones to speak English! My first call was to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Queens Village, New York. I mean every Sunday could have been a festival Sunday for us. My second call was at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, well sure I guess we could have said our name day was Easter, but let's face it, it was going to be over shadowed by . . . Easter. But here I am now . . . the Lutheran Church that takes its name as Trinity, and one of my favorite festivals in the church. Now, you know me by now, every time we come to a festival I usually say, “This is my favorite festival of the church.” But I just love festivals. I love those opportunities for us as Christian believers to be able to commemorate those special events and those special Christianages in our church, and as Trinity Lutheran Church, to lift up the Holy name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, what a good day for us to be the church and to lift up the name of God.

Now for most people as we try to grapple with what the Trinity is, one in three, three in one, we know that somehow the math doesn't add up. And we try to get our hands around this theological principle of who God is as the early church during those first 300 years struggled with the very identity, the very nature of who God was. And you and I could debate and talk about all of these different theological nuances to why as Christians we believe in this mystery of faith, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But if we just went that direction, if all that we talked about were the theological nuances, these theological principles, we would miss the basic truth of what the Trinity is about.

What I loved about that Icon from Rublev is I think he captures for us the basic truth of the Trinity. That is God is more than just an idea. God is more than just a church doctrine. God is based in a relationship of love and grace and fellowship.

You see when we talk about God as love, when we talk about God giving us grace, when we talk about God wanting us to be in fellowship with one another, God takes that one step further by in his very nature being love and grace and fellowship, and that's so important for us these days. It is so important for us because we can see that so much of life is brokenness. So much of life we can experience pain and loss. So much of life is filled with violence and more, fractured friendships and the loss of loved ones. We see in our nature this brokenness of humanity again and again.

This past weekend I was able to visit my son. I had a conference in California and then I went to visit him. Driving over the Mojave Desert to Las Vegas I was struck that Las Vegas has both this opulence to it, the glitz and the lights and the beautiful people, but also sometimes even on the same street, in the same room, there you can see brokenness and shadows. That's a lot like us.

When Paul is writing to the congregation in Rome, he is speaking of this human condition because he understands it all too well. He's experienced it in his own life, and so he can also speak to God's desire to be in relationship with us, and this passage from Romans that was read for Lutherans is the very heart of the gospel. Justification by faith that you and I don't deserve this love and grace and fellowship which God really offers to us; it's given to us as a gift. And Paul said that even though we are broken, we have peace in God through Jesus and that God wants to know you and me personally as crazy as that seems, this God who is so powerful, so majestic, wants to be in relationship with you, and he wants you and I to be co-workers in his kingdom.

And so he seeks us out to love us, to strengthen us, to care for us, to transform us. Paul uses language of transformation even in the midst of suffering and he says that transformation is at work in us and there's this amazing progression that happens in our life. Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us. God is at work in your life.

Jesus knew that as well. A reading from the gospel happens right before, literally right before he is betrayed. And he speaks of how God is going to send us a helper, a Holy Spirit, and that your life and my life will be this continual process of going deeper and deeper in love with God, and seeking to understand his purpose in our life. Jesus calls this "all the truth," you and I will know all of the truth because God's Holy Spirit will guide us into this unknown future. Bishop and Biblical Scholar N.T Wright says this; *"Part of the job of the spirit, the 'helper', will be to lead them into all the truth. The spirit will remind them of what Jesus had already said to them. The spirit will also guide them, nudging their minds and imaginations into ways of knowing, and things to know, that Jesus would like to have said but couldn't at the time."*

See our faith and Holy Trinity is always ongoing, always being revealed, always being developed, because we are in relationship with God by virtue of our Holy Baptism, and he calls us again and again to experience the fullness of his love and grace and fellowship. And the function of that Spirit that we celebrated last week is to glorify God in Christ, to teach us and to help us to develop our character and to make us one in him. And our whole Christian life is a fulfillment of those ancient prophecies that we read in the Bible, these holy words that Jesus shared with us in the gospel, and these reflections on the life of Jesus given to us by the writers of the New Testament.

It is for us all truth, and God's Spirit is there to help us to remember that truth. God is offering a new fresh revelation in God, a very daunting of his holy kingdom, and today is our *Name Day*. Today is the day that we remember that we are baptized people of God, invited into that very relationship that God shares with God's self, Father, Son, and Spirit. We are people of the Trinity. Remember, and trust, that God is leading us, and helping us in our journey in life.

Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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