

Sermon

Dominion

A Sermon for Cary Presbyterian Church

Sunday, June 4, 2023

Trinity Sunday

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

*27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29 God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

*Psa. 8:1 O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory above the heavens.
2 Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.*

*3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?*

5 *Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
 and crowned them with glory and honor.*
6 *You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under their feet,*
7 *all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,*
8 *the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

9 *O LORD, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

- I. Today is Trinity Sunday — Kim wisely completed her residency before I could assign it to her to preach today!**
- A. Heads of staff for generations have pawned off this Sunday to others as the theology of the Trinity is notoriously enigmatic.**
- B. And yet, like most things true — this is *both* simple and complex.**
- 1. One God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.**
- 2.**

Unlike other festivals in the church's liturgical calendar, Trinity Sunday centers on a doctrine of the church, rather than an event. It celebrates the unfathomable mystery of God's being as Holy Trinity. It is a day of adoration and praise of the one, eternal, incomprehensible God.

Trinity Sunday, in a sense, synthesizes all we have celebrated over the past months which have centered on God's mighty acts: Christmas-Epiphany celebrating God's taking flesh and dwelling among us in Jesus Christ; Easter celebrating Christ's death and resurrection for us; Pentecost celebrating God the Holy Spirit becoming our Sanctifier, Guide, and Teacher. It is, therefore, a fitting transition to that part of the year when Sunday by Sunday the work of God among us is unfolded in a more general way.

The triune God is the basis of all we are and do as Christians. In the name of this triune God we are baptized. As the baptized ones we bear the name of the triune God in our being. We are of the family of the triune God. We affirm this parentage when, in reciting the creeds, we say what we believe. Our discipleship is rooted in the mighty acts of this triune God who is active in redeeming the world. The triune God is the basis of all our prayers — we pray to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. The Trinity holds central place in our faith. ...

In celebrating Trinity Sunday, remember that every Lord's Day is consecrated to the triune God. On the first day of the week, God began creation. On the first day of the week, God raised Jesus from the grave. On the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit descended on the newly born church. Every Sunday is special. Every Sunday is a day of the Holy Trinity.¹

3. At the heart of what we believe we see the doctrine of the Trinity as an attempt to describe the Love of God overflowing...²

- a) God's love creates an enclave for life out of chaos.³**
- b) God's Love lives among us full of grace and truth to show us salvation as the way, the truth and the life.⁴**
- c) God's love infuses the new community of the church with Pentecostal powers and pledges to remain with us to the end of the age as a companion and counselor.⁵**

Bower, Peter C., and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), eds. *The Companion to the Book of Common Worship*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky: Geneva Press: Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2003.

² "The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing," a 2006 study paper of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

³ Genesis 1-2

⁴ John 1:4 & 14:6

⁵ Acts 2

C. In all these acts of Love, God is showing us how to rule. That is, the Kingdom of God, is what it would look like if the governance of God was fully manifest among us.

- 1. Let's us not overlook the stunning decision of God to let the KoG be only as manifest as we are willing to establish it with God's help.**
- 2. NOT made manifest by divine fiat!**
- 3. Rather, only made available as we join God in good governance . . . we pray with Christ,**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

II. How do we join God in such good governance?

- A. A God whose love brings life from Chaos — Love of creation.**
- B. A God whose love brings salvation by providing a way and a truth and a life abundantly joyful. — Love of disciples.**
- C. A God whose love is manifest in sighs too deep for words, for companionship on our journey, and whose counsel is available to all who turn as seek it. Love for all of God's children everywhere.**
- D. Today's scripture lessons - traditionally assigned to Trinity Sunday — offer a clue.**

III. Genesis 1:26-31 — The sixth day. — Dominion.

A.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29 God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall

have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

- B. It would be hard to overestimate how much our misunderstanding of the words “subdue” and “dominion”**
- C. God’s “dominion” is manifest in an overflowing love!**
 - 1. Too often our “dominion” has been manifest at the tip of a sword.**
- D. God’s governance is an invitation to *join* God in establishing the Kingdom, “on earth as it is in heaven”**
 - 1. Too often we have thought to do that by *imposing* our ideologies on others, rather than inviting their partnership with us in creating a workable human community.**
- E. God’s “dominion” is not *just* for us but is for the world and all it’s creatures . . .⁶**

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” 17 God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

IV. What if we let *our* call to “dominion” be a manifestation of God’s love - like the Trinity?

- A. Love of the earth —**
 - 1. Our Solar collection system is *almost* ready to go online — will happen soon. Just one way we are trying to love creation.**

⁶ Genesis 9:8-16

2. We have had many generous gifts of LED light fixtures which further lower our carbon footprint.
3. Every time we replace an old hv/ac system or water heater we are looking for more efficient ways to accomplish those things.

B. Love of one another —

1. The constant care and companionship we offer one another — especially in times of trouble:

- a) Deacons
- b) Stephen Ministers
- c) Parish Nurse
- d) pastoral staff
- e) Kitchen katz
- f) Note writers
- g) prayer shawl knitters
- h) frozen dinner cookers
- i) Triple F
- j)
- k) and a dozen other ministries

C. Love of the world full of needs:

1. ASP
2. Habitat for Humanity
3. Esperanza de Guatemala
4. One Wake
5. Our Community Partnership - team
6. Dorcas

- V. Perhaps you will say, a “dominion” of love is too soft. What we need to do is *fight* to implement the Kingdom.**

- A. In our understandable anxiety created by a world seemingly always at the brink of ruin, we *might* be inclined to *fight*.**
- B. But we have the example of Jesus at the hour of his betrayal and arrest seeing Peter grab a sword and strike the slave of the High Priest and Jesus rebuked him for his impulse to fight.⁷**
- C. Love may seem weak and ineffectual in the face of great peril — but the Kingdom of God is established by just that sort of weakness.**
- D. It is, of course, foolishness for God to entrust such incredibly important work to people as weak as you and I and to ask that we use the weak tool of love to do it . . . but this has been God’s way from Genesis chapter one on.**
- E. I Corinthians 1:22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.
26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God.*

VI. Finally —Participation with God in God’s dominion leads to wonder and adoration which are the heart of worship not *just* on Trinity Sunday - but always.

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,

⁷ John 18:10

*the moon and the stars that you have established;
4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?*

*5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honor.*

*6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
7 all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

*9 O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

**Friends - the invitation is ours to join God in loving
dominion. May it be so to the glory of God the
Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.**