

**Trinity Sunday: Genesis 1:1-2:4a; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20;
Psalm 8**

Today in our opening collect we prayed to God acknowledging that he gives us grace and power to worship the Unity. God gives grace and power for us to worship the Unity, is what we prayed. And so first a word about the Unity. What unity? You might ask. Given this very day we have people gathered together right here in St. Paul's from a myriad of backgrounds. We have people from different religious denominations and also some who identify with no religious denomination. And so, I find it interesting that today, we would talk about worshipping the Godhead, the Holy Trinity as the Unity. That God is three persons in one is one form of unity. This is what we call the Trinity, and we will talk a bit more about this in a moment since this is, after all, Trinity Sunday. But also, God is unity in that God is the God of the entire world. "The whole world is mine," says God to us in Exodus 19:5. And again in Jeremiah 32:27, "I am the Lord, the God of all peoples in the world." And yet again in Ephesians 4:6, There is, "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." And of course, we all know the scripture: "For God so loved *the world*..." And so, scripture puts forth to us that God is the God of the entire world. Jesus himself says of himself that by being lifted up on the cross, that when this happens, he will draw all peoples toward himself, and I quote, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people toward Myself." All people. Says Jesus. Toward me.

But so, who is this Jesus, and why would we want to be drawn toward him? Well, because he is part of the Godhead. And we, being made in the image of God, as we were told today in Genesis, this is how we were created. We were created to long to be in unity with God by bearing God's image while being brought into relationship with the Trinity. Our natural state as God intended is to be in unity with God. We long for this as the deer pants for the water. And we see the Trinity whom we long to be in relationship with, today in Genesis. We see today that God the creator made the heavens and the earth and us and that this is one person of the Godhead, but also in Genesis, we saw God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity moving upon the waters. It is God the Holy Spirit who indwells the church. Church literally translates as "called out ones." Churches aren't buildings or denominations; they are the people called out from

the world into God's spiritual family. And today when we renew our baptismal vows, we will pray that we believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church. The origin of the word catholic is universal. This is why the word catholic is lower case today in our baptismal renewal. God is the God of all his children who are born of his Holy Spirit which means God's church is catholic or universal. And thirdly in Genesis today again, we see the second person of the Godhead, because we are told that everything in creation was able to come alive, once the Light shines. Because there has to be light. Jesus says to us in scripture, "I am the Light of the world." Jesus claims to be light. The third person of the Trinity is Light. And also, Jesus claims to be Life, to possess the very ability within him to give life saying: "Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live," and also, "I am the way, the truth and the life." And then Jesus adds, "No one comes unto the Father but by me." And some may say, "But Heather, that sounds exclusionary – if the only way to come to God the Creator is through one means." But God's provision for Life is actually inclusionary because God provided this means to be available to all people, if we but choose to trust God and receive his invitation to be born of God. If we were to drop all the labels that separate us, such as Christian, and Muslim, and Buddhist, and Hindu, and Catholic, and Protestant, and searching and so on... and if we were to take a step back and just see...the Gospel message would be this: That our Holy God the Creator, sent God the Son to make us Holy, so that God's Holy Spirit can indwell us. And by believing in this Triune and Holy God, we become children of God. That's it. And to me, that is a very unifying message. That God the Holy Spirit seeks to give birth and indwell God's Holy Children. This message makes sense given we thank God, that God is Holy, for who would want an unholy God? An unholy Creator would make us subject to the capricious whims of evil and not sound love. And because God is Holy, God's children must be made holy in order to dwell with God and live in unity. We see this all around us in the world today, that we cannot abide together if we have not unity. And we cannot have unity, if we be not holy. For without holiness, there is always evil and sin. And so, God provided a means by which the very Spirit of God can indwell us. God the son purifies us. We are told of this in 1 John Chapter 3 verse 3, for it says that when we place our hope in Christ that "everyone who has this hope in Christ purifies themselves just as Christ is pure." And this is what we are witnessing today in the Baptism of baby Clara. We are

witnessing a person being purified and born of God. And water is the sacramental means, and the indwelling of God's spirit is the birth. Jesus says to us that we must be born of water and of the Spirit. Jesus makes this clear to us in the Gospel of John saying: "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and of the Spirit." Today, baby Clara, is being born of water and of the Spirit.

But so, a word about water is in order here. Because just as Jesus explains to us that he is Light, and that he is Life, Jesus also explains to us that he is Living Water. Jesus says to us in John: "Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." And also, whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become in them a fount of water springing up to eternal life." And so, we see that God is referring to a living water, a spiritual sacrament, that purifies and gives eternal life when we are born from above through baptism and through belief.

And with this being Trinity Sunday, it is no coincidence that we today are focusing upon this Water. Given understanding the Trinity can be difficult, because how can One God be three Beings and yet one? Yet it is the common compound of Water through which this is best conveyed because water exists in three states. It is a gas, and a liquid and a solid. Yet in whichever form it exists, it has the same chemical makeup. Water appears in completely separate states, and yet it is the same substance. This is why we pray in the Nicene Creed that Jesus is of one being with the Father. If the condition of distinct and separate states of the same substance is possible in the most basic of elemental compounds, meaning, water, how much moreso is this possible in the most complex of all entities, meaning God? And so if we were to take a lighthearted understanding of the Trinity, we could associate God the Creator the ephemeral being of the universe with gas, and the Holy Spirit whom we were told today in Genesis moved upon the face of the waters and becomes within us streams of living water we could in this light hearted yet mystical analogy associate the Holy Spirit with water, and Jesus, who became incarnate in the flesh, Jesus would be the most solid form of the Godhead and could be associate with the form of ice. And continuing on in this lighthearted yet mystical analogy, it would make sense that God instructed us to baptize people into God's family with water. Water being threefold yet one, or a basic similitude of God's trinitarian

existence. And so, God chose water to be used for our baptismal covenant. But also, it would be difficult to baptize with gas since you cannot direct a gas to fall upon a person's forehead, and it would be worse to baptize by dropping ice cubes on peoples' heads, given that might hurt. But so, I am being lighthearted, but I am also being serious. It is the spiritual sacrament of baptism that Jesus himself commands for us to do today saying: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

This is the Great Commission. The Trinity is set forth within the Great Commission. Given some people might say to me, "But Heather, the world Trinity is mentioned nowhere in the scriptures." And you would be correct. And yet the function of the Godhead and understandings of the Trinity are throughout the whole of scripture as we just saw one instance of in Genesis. And now also in the Great Commission given Jesus tells us to baptize into *the* Name of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In the original Greek, baptize into *the* Name is singular. Jesus lists *one name* and equates that one name with three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are baptized into one name yet three beings of the Godhead. We are baptized into the Trinity, and into unity with God.

But also, and this is very pertinent for us today, Jesus does not say to go and baptize and leave it at that. Jesus says to also teach people who are baptized to obey everything that he commands. And the most important thing that Jesus commands is to do the will of the Father. This is why Jesus instructed us to pray to the Father, "Thy will be done." And this is what Jesus exemplified for us, that he came to finish the work that the Father gave for him to do. And Jesus commands us saying, "The work of God is this, to believe in the one whom he has sent." And the one whom God the Father has sent is God the Son. And so, this is why we are gathered today around a fountain of water and around a child. It is because we are promising to help this child, born of God's Holy Spirit this day to grow up into an understanding of what has been done within her this day. Today she is being born of the one faith, through the one and only Lord, in one Baptism. And I always thought it odd, the notion of one baptism being this miraculous. I mean is it only our individual baptisms that save us? But God has

shown me that it is our baptism that in a mystical way ties into the baptism of Jesus. Our one baptism without the one baptism of Jesus would mean nothing. Jesus says to us in scripture: "Apart from me you can do nothing." But furthermore, Jesus elaborates on one baptism by explaining it to us in Luke 12:50 saying, "but I have a baptism to undergo and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!" This is the one baptism. The baptism that Jesus underwent for us. Jesus is here referring to his death on the cross as his baptism. Jesus's death for us is the one baptism that we believe in. And why? Why did Jesus undergo this one baptism for the entire world? Well...it is because the sacrament of baptism unites us with the purifying work of the cross. And so, do you see it? We are united through the sacrament of water with the death of Jesus, and also the resurrection. It is Jesus that saves us through his purifying work on the cross. God the Son is the grace, Holy Spirit is the power, and God the Father is the Giver of these Provisions for all. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There's the Trinity in action for you. And also, there is Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace as Mighty God. This definition is outlined for us in Isaiah 9:6 and sung in Handel's Messiah. And it is Prince of Peace who purifies us to receive Wonderful Counselor to be born of Everlasting Father. And so it is that our eternal birth opens through Jesus Christ, or God the Son. Jesus says to us, "I am the Gate." And elsewhere I am "the Way." And Jesus, or God incarnate, is also equated with solid rock throughout the whole of scripture, as the one foundation, the joining stone. We are told of this in Acts chapter 4 verses 11 and 12, that Jesus is the stone, the solid stone, the cornerstone that joins all peoples and that, "Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given unto humankind by which we must be saved."

Amen.