

Holy Trinity Year C 2010
John 16:12-15; Romans 5:1-5
Sermon for Advent LC
May 30th, 2010

“How Do you Work this Thing?”

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

A friend of mine shared this story in one of his writings and I thought it was great and wanted to pass it on as today we embark on the discussion of God's three-in-oneness on Holy Trinity Sunday. The story goes like this: There was a soldier in a foxhole. I don't know which war it was. This isn't my story. Soldier in a foxhole. Under fire. Bombs dropping all around. Bullets whizzing by. A soldier in his helmet empty handed. I don't know his name. He's digging. Scraping the ground with his hands or his knife. Trying to make the hole deeper. Trying to throw up some more earth between him and the enemy, trying to wrestle a little more protection out of this lonely shelter, and suddenly he unearths a silver cross. And just as suddenly another soldier slides into the place beside him. Another man afraid for his life has found the feeble shelter of this foxhole and it turns out that it's the company's chaplain. The first soldier sees the tiny crosses on the lapels of his uniform, looks at the thing he's dug out of the ground, holds it up, and shouts over the sounds of the battle "Thank God you're here; how do you work this thing?"

How do you work this thing? Great question eh? I mean really, how do we work this God thing that we hold our faith in? While we can chuckle at the comically of this question- it's a question that many people wonder when their life is pushed to the brink, their faith is up against a wall they wonder how do you work this God thing? So often we want in our life a God that works if we just do certain things- we long for a magic button that can make all things right as we see them and we desire a simple answer to how God works - and a longing to have god work for us, how we want, how we need. And unfortunately sometimes God's action and activity and presence is confusing. Today is one of those confusing days as we dedicate a Sunday to the Holy Trinity- the celebration of God, three in one. How does that work? How is that possible? Now, I assume for most of us we connect with one of the three parts of the trinity over the others. Let's review quickly what the Trinity is- the Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and most of the confusion over it comes from the third person- the Spirit. Most people can understand God the creator to some level, and God the Son to another, but the Spirit well the spirit often creates confusion. It doesn't seem as popular either I mean we have rules against saying Oh My G>O>D- right and if anyone says Jesus...C.h.r.i.s.t. in a way that's not worshipful people get upset- rightfully so- but I am yet to hear someone, angry or upset or scared say Oh My Holy Spirit! So what is this third member of the Trinity all about and why doesn't anyone care if we use it in vain? It seems that is where we need to focus today as we live in this Pentecost time of celebrating that the Spirit is with us now and forever. But how does it work?

We talked last week about the gift of the Spirit coming to the early church and still coming to us to bring us to life- sounds good but really what does it mean? Our Gospel today helps us unpack it a little more as Jesus says **when the Spirit of Truth**

comes he will guide you into all truth...and later He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. And Paul helps too in his letter to the Romans– when he says, **God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.** So in those two spots we have a little bit of a description of what the Holy Spirit does and how it works. The Holy Spirit is what continues to be with us now as we live in this time of after Christ’s death and resurrection and before Christ’s coming again. The Spirit will guide us and lead us and help us to understand what Christ is about as we live into our faith. The Spirit continues to pour God’s love over us as we exist. But really...how does it work? Where is it? Where is God now– someone asked me that this week in the midst of a conversation about the state of the world and I said God is here, with us, in us, and calling us to be the ones who proclaim what God is doing and God works. Folks, take a moment and think– where do you see God at work, when do you feel God with you, how does God come to you? Those places I believe is the Spirit breathing life to you and in you– that is our God working. But we HAVE to be active in searching in allowing in asking God to work in us– you have to be serious about your willingness to be used by the Spirit– for when you are –God will blow right through you. So how does this God work? This God works through you– in spite of our brokenness and our many flaws God comes to us and calls us to be the ones who along with Spirit glorify Christ and let the world know what Christ is doing. You see we have a God who is active, and who comes to you and calls you to be active in your faith.

This is finally what we celebrate on Trinity Sunday: not a centuries old doctrine, as important in the history of the Church as that doctrine is. Instead we celebrate the story of God's love in Jesus, which restores our broken humanity and our broken creation. We celebrate that God has come to you and for you and now works through you. Dear friends, my prayer for us as Advent Lutheran Church this day is that we begin to earnestly see that God works not by some magic button or special thing we say but rather through the very lives that you lead. God works dear friends all the time, won't you work hard to be part of that work? We are at a time in our life together as the church where we have to get serious so I want to challenge you again to do something I challenged you to do in the past– take this week, and pray to God daily that He will show you where you need to go for him– pray that God will open you up to new opportunities of serving him– step out of your comfort zone, allow the Spirit of truth to lead you, and live your faith. Ask God to lead you, and really mean it– then we can talk about how God has led you and how God is working in you and through you.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.