

June 15, 2025  
Holy Trinity Sunday

“Regarding God”

John 8:48-59

The theme running through all of today’s Holy Trinity Sunday readings points to Christ pre-existing the creation. This is an important point and one that caused a lot of conflict in the first few hundred years of the Christian Church. The Council of Nicaea in the year 325 was called to specifically address this issue caused by a bishop named Arius teaching that Christ was a creation of the Father and of a different type and different substance than Yahweh. The Nicene Creed originated from that council’s correct decision affirming the divinity of Christ from eternity that is attested to by Holy Scripture. The creed soon after was adjusted as some folks tried making similar mistaken claims about the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God is clear, crystal clear especially in the baptismal formula stated by Christ Himself: God is the Triune God-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is truth, albeit a truth we really cannot get our human minds to comprehend—which explains all the words in the Athanasian Creed desperately attempting to do so. It’s a good creed, but it does kind of leave your head spinning.

As I was pondering today’s readings in preparation for this sermon, specifically Solomon’s inspired words about divine wisdom from eternity, a pithy saying I ran across recently somewhere on the internet came to mind: Intelligence is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is knowing not to use it in a fruit salad.

This seems rather apt for our consideration of the one true God. We get a lot of information about Him from His Word. We learn certain truths and principles about how He operates. We know a lot about His history interacting with the world, specifically the ancient Jews and later, wonderfully through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have some intelligence about God.

But we’re not always that swift about how we apply that knowledge—we’re often unwise. I’m sure this is true in many, many ways, but the one that really jumps out at me is when we use our knowledge of God to try and work our way around God.

This is quite obvious in our Gospel lesson as the Jews are speaking to Jesus. They are so intelligent in their knowledge of the law and the prophets, but they’ve used that to frame God in a manner to their liking; a manner in which they have the power to be righteous before Him. Yet the Son of God, the one to whom the law and the prophets point, is before them and they accuse Him of having a demon! These Jews reject the idea of repentance, and in doing so they reject the Messiah who has come to save them from their sins. They want to kill Him...and eventually they will do just that.

The same thing happens today. Some folks believe if they go to church, tithe their 10 percent and don’t commit any of the “really bad” sins, they are righteous in God’s sight. No need for real repentance. Maybe worse are those in our community today who blow off church completely, don’t read God’s Word, barely pray but still think themselves Christian and righteous because they mostly walk within our country’s laws and don’t commit the “really bad” sins.

And, lest we think too highly of ourselves, I think everyone of us makes a practice of making God less than He is when we go ahead with a sin because, well, it’s not one of the “really bad” ones and Jesus died so I’ll be forgiven—no biggie.

But this “work around” we create regarding God stems from a wrong understanding of God. We very much tend to look at God as an angry judge. What’s the natural reaction if you are going before a judge full of wrath and anger? You’d better justify yourself! You better somehow get to a “not guilty” verdict or He is going to nail your hide to the wall! This is how we’ve been thinking since the very first sin.

God confronts Adam in the Garden of Eden and his reaction is “Not my fault! I’m innocent. It was the woman YOU gave me.” Eve is like, “Not my fault! I’m innocent. It was the serpent who deceived me.” The Jews, “Not our fault! We keep the law. We’re the chosen people of God.” So-called Christians. “Not my fault! I go to church, think the right thoughts. I’m innocent...not like all those “real” sinners.”

But folks, we’re not facing an angry, wrathful judge! There is a judgment; this is most certainly true. There are serious, eternal consequences for falling on the wrong side of this judgment; this is also most certainly true. But the one who judges is not enraged at you because of your sins!

Just examine the Holy Trinity according to the Apostles’ Creed. The Father creates mankind. He created you. Not to be the object of His wrath, but to be the object of His love! The Son, the One who will one day return to judge, His mission was to redeem sinners—the same sinners who wanted to stone Him and later nailed Him to a cross! He serves them out of steadfast love not toward their eternal demise, but toward their eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit’s mission is to call sinners through the Gospel of Christ and secure them in Christ’s church, making them holy, and gathering these, God’s children, into His eternal kingdom.

Yes God is a judge, but a loving Lord whose utmost desire is to save those He created! How then does one react when coming before this type of judge? You don’t attempt to justify yourself. You acknowledge your guilt and throw yourself upon His abundant mercy! God’s inclination toward you is obvious in Christ—the One who came to save HIS people from their sins!

It is clear in Holy Scripture that the Father is God, the Son in God, the Spirit is God. While the nature of the Trinity may be incomprehensible to us, the desire of this God is crystal clear—He loves His creation. He saves His creation. He saves sinners.

Today’s reading from Proverbs is very indicative of how God looks upon His creation. The chapter personifies the wisdom of God, and many people equate this wisdom as being Christ, or at least pointing toward Him. I want you then to take to heart the picture it paints of God’s work of creation: *“Then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.”*

We have a loving, merciful God whose desire is to delight in His created people! Our sin ruined that delight, but through Christ, out of His love, grace and mercy, He has restored us to that delight.

Does any of us want to work around such a God? To instead choose sin, choose the idols of the world and avert His favor? Of course not!

If you’re in the practice of regarding God as the stern judge whose scowl is looking down upon you as you drag yourself before His face hoping to avoid His wrath, you view Him wrongly. He is the triune God—your Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier—all of Him being for your benefit and for your salvation. Love Him. Serve Him. Worship Him. Repent of your sin to Him. Receive full forgiveness from Him. Because perhaps the only thing that is more

bewildering to us than His mysterious triune nature, is the unfathomable abundance of His love, grace and mercy for us sinners.

Amen.