



Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon for Sunday Holy Trinity 2017

The Holy Name of God!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

• The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mt 28, 16-20:

- ^{ESV} ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.
- ¹⁷ And when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted.
- ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and our hearts and reveal to us the Heart and Mission of the Holy Trinity. Amen.*

• **Dear Members of the Holy Trinity!**

- Holy Trinity Sunday. We worship and give praise to the revealed mystery of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three divine persons in one Godhead. Jesus revealed the Name of God to us. No philosopher, nor scribe nor Pharisee, nor prophet came up with it. Jesus introduced us to the Father and to the Holy Spirit and of course revealed who He Himself is!
- Now, many people ask this question, how could this be, how can it be that the most important being in the universe hides Himself from His creation? Well, that is what the Bible from beginning to end reveals to us, the story of fallen mankind, and what God's action was is and will be to restore us to see Him again like He really is.
- We have heard the reading from the beginning of the Bible, how God, in three persons created the heavens and the earth and all plants and creatures, in their complementary pairs. How He made a space for us by stretching out the heavens. He created ample space for all of us- quite strange that we should fight over land!

- We were made very good! Not just "plonked" on one blob, no, we were made with detail in mind, carefully designed, precision engineering in action, beautiful, colourful, diversity, and yet ordered, everything in harmony. Wild animals and domestic animals. Complimentary pairs- male and female. No cloning! Individuality and at the same time, all belonging to a kind. Sophisticated, beautiful, working, fruitful, sustainable, simply perfect!
- And all Creation saw and worshipped the Creator. He was walking amongst them in Paradise. Creation received the goodness of its Creator with thanksgiving.
- Tragedy struck when an angelic rebellion or revolution deceived first Eve then Adam into believing that the Creator was withholding the best from them. They ate of the evil food, commanded by satan. They were driven out of paradise, so that this fallen mankind would not become eternal by eating of the tree of Life.
- Since that day mankind turned blind! Since that day the Creator is hidden from our sight. Since that day mankind has lost its certain knowledge of God. Since that day mankind by nature started to create their own gods, idols and sacrificial systems. The void was quickly filled by own designs and constructions, picking up the "stompies", so to speak, of what was left over in mankind's accumulated sense of paradise.
- Its not that God is hidden: Mankind is blind! Imagine a blind man saying, I am sure the sky cannot be blue, I cannot feel it, nor see it. That's about how foolish it is to say, God hides Himself.
- Did God never reveal Himself? Jesus said, who sees me sees the Father! God did come to earth, born as man. The Word, who created the heavens, became flesh, became human. God came down in His Son to meet us face to face. But, who recognised Him? Not even John the Baptist recognised that this was God in human nature. Do you see, the blindness? Nothing wrong with the eyes God gave humankind. They all saw Jesus physically standing there, but they didn't realised this is God! This is the I AM.
- Their eyes of the heart were blind! They didn't expect God to come in

human nature! They didn't know about God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And that the Son would take on humanity to reveal God to humankind. He came to make God's name known. That God is our Father in Heaven. That this Father has never been alone, but that this Father has always loved His Son. And that the Son always loves the Father and the same goes for the Holy Spirit. They are united in divine Love.

- And this Love of God created the universe, because God in three persons wanted to share His Love with all other creatures. And this God was Lord of all, but not in the sense Satan has led mankind to fill the word "Lord". The "Lord" does not lord it over us, but first and foremost, His heart is not to rule, but to serve. If God rules He does it to curb the wildest outbreaks of evil which threatens to destroy us. But, His heart is in being our Father.

- And that is why He sent His Son, to come and give us of His heart. The lost Spirit of God, who enlightens our inner eyes, our mind, and desires and will—God send His son to share this Spirit with us, so that we can realise His goodness, His loving-kindness, His caring for us!

- In light of the terrible Fall, if we consider how stubborn mankind was, is, and will be, Psalm 8 puts the right question in our mouths [Ps 8,3-4]: "*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?*"

- What is man that You are mindful of Him? Who am I that You care for me, God? Who am I that I was baptised with Your Name, while I was a sinner? That is who God is! Our Saviour, Life-giver and Comforter! What no human or angel or anyone would have dreamt of, God has done, is doing and continues to do: He gets involved in our Salvation with everything He has to give! God is not holding back anything. It is not true what Satan tries to still deceive us with, that God just spoils our fun, that God with His Laws is like an old grumpy man who just wants to stop us from having a good Life. No, His Laws are not against Life. He gave them to protect Life. His will is pro-Life.

- This is not always the case with human laws and rights. They are not always

pro-Life. They are often pro-death, if we think of abortion rights. This again reveals the blindness towards the original will of the Creator.

• Jesus came to give us new eyes of faith, that is a new heart, which will receive the Love of God thankfully. The Love of God is not a feeling, but an act of sacrifice! The Father sacrificing His Son and resurrecting Him to eternal Glory! This Glory of the Son was handed out to eleven disciples through whom the Spirit of God was be poured out onto all flesh. Through baptism and teaching this Glory of God, this sacrificial Love of God, forgiveness of sins, Life and Salvation is to be handed out to all people!

• Do you see, dear congregation, how God shares His Name, who He is, with sinners! God's Name is our salvation! God's Name is His Mission to fill His house with children again. He is a God who loves to share Himself with others! He is the last person in the universe who is stingy with Grace! He is all about giving His Spirit to those who have been cleansed! He wants His house, His new paradise, His new temple, to be filled with many diverse people.

• Therefore, He has given us His Name, to share His name with others, to baptise those outside His house, with His Name and to share His Word, His mind and desires, His wisdom with many more, until His house is filled to the brim.

• The Name of God is not just a like tag, to identify Him, there is power in His Name. God's nature is proclaimed through His Name. God's Name opens our eyes of the heart and we realise, He lives and gives Life to us. Then we begin to see His works in creation, in our lives, in the church, in the world, everywhere! How could anyone miss it!

• And again the Psalm-writer puts the right words into our minds:

• *"O Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"* Alleluia. **Amen.**

• *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.* (^{ESV} 2 Cor 13:14.)