

## **“Holy Trinity. Does it even matter?”**

What Sunday do we have today? Yes, Holy Trinity Sunday. That is how the Church describes the God of the Bible who is one God, but – three persons. What do you think about it? Do you think about it at all?

Do you marvel at this greatest of mysteries that are revealed to us by the only true God? Do you think that it is even important to consider the way the true God has revealed Himself?

Maybe it is enough just to know that there is a god, some eternal and obviously rather powerful being? Many would say, as you probably have heard: “I believe that there is a god, or something higher. I have my faith. That’s enough for me.”

So, is it enough to have just your faith, just a general idea of a god or a belief that something higher exists, or do we need to know the only true God as God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Because for sure it is easier and less confronting if we speak simply about God. I guess that is why such language is often used even by us, Christians. It is like talking about some impersonal, general idea on which most people can agree.

General ideas are not confronting, they do not challenge us, they do not accuse us, they do not require anything from us. The Triune God does. Therefore, many are happy to chat about the idea of God and spirituality and things like that.

“We too are spiritual people...”. So, if someone wants to be eternally separated from this very personal God, and you know how the Bible calls this separation – yes, hell, then it is enough to just know that there is a god, or something higher...

But if you want to stand before God’s throne on the Last Day and to hear: “You are forgiven, come and receive the Kingdom!” and then to enter that incredibly beautiful place that is prepared for those who love the true God, then it’s not enough.

The Bible is clear. Jesus said: “This is eternal life, when you know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.” The Athanasian Creed, which we confessed today, is as clear as it gets.

You cannot be saved, and you cannot hope for forgiveness and acceptance on the Last Day unless you know the only true God, unless you fear, love and trust God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit above all things. One God, three persons.

But we could even ask a different question – why would anyone NOT want to know the only true God as He has revealed Himself? Can you think of anything more important to know than that Being who stands behind everything that exists?

Just think about this for a moment! What or who else could be more fascinating, more intriguing, more desirable to know than the One, who has created and still keeps together everything that exists? The starry skies, the indescribable abundance of living creatures, things visible and invisible. He was there in the beginning. He

has all the answers. It is so interesting to know people who have achieved something remarkable, it is breathtaking to discover how wonderful and incredibly complex this creation is and how it works, but then just reflect – how much more exciting it would be to know the One who is behind all of this?

Who is this genius, this super-intelligence, this divine artist, this most beautiful, accomplished, all-wise and incredible person? Wouldn't that make perfect sense to desire with our whole hearts to find out anything that can be known about Him?

This is one of the vivid manifestations of our sinfulness, that we are able *not* to care, *not* to be interested, *not* to desire to know Him. To be so foolishly blind and stubbornly so, and in our arrogance to call such an attitude reasonable.

Our state is miserable, indeed. But whatever arrogant and foolish we are, the one true God comes to us and speaks to us: "I want you to know me!" He wants you to know what kind of God He is, what His attitude towards you is, He wants everyone to inherit life eternal with Him. He wants you to know Him as your God.

And that is not just about knowing the correct information about God. "I believe this to be true." No! There is so much more. It is about personal relationships, about trusting, listening, conversing, rejoicing, sharing, relying upon Him.

One of the best places to go to learn about the Triune God and what He has done and does and has prepared for you is... can you guess? That little book... Yes, Luther's Small Catechism. Luther's explanation of the Apostles' Creed.

This is where we can see why it is so essential to know the true God as the Trinity and as your God. Let's read some of it and let joy and gratitude, praise and wonder fill our hearts! Luther begins with describing the gifts of God the Father.

**"God has made you and all creatures; He has given you your body and soul, eyes, ears, and all your members, your reason and all your senses, and still takes care of them."**

You are created by God the Father. All your senses, all your abilities, all your gifts and talents, all of them are given to you as gifts of your Father in heaven. Not just that, He promises: "I will take care of them that you will have them not only today, but also tomorrow, and the day after that and so on... as long as you live."

**"He also gives you clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals, and all you have. He richly and daily provides you with all that you need to support this body and life."**

Not just you yourself, but everything that you need for this life, to sustain it, to enjoy it, to share it with others, all your daily bread and all the people in your life. "Those are my gifts to you, enjoy!" Thus says God the Father.

There is such abundance of these gifts all around us, that we don't see them as a miracle, or as something that we need to be forever thankful for, we don't receive them with awe, we assume that that is how things are supposed to be. But it is not...

Go on a little trip, leave this green and lively planet Earth, where we are sheltered, and see what the rest of this Universe is like – cold, life-less, deadly. Then come back, look around at this overwhelming abundance of life that we have here and sing praises to the Father from the bottom of your lungs! He made all this for you.

Besides **“He defends you against all danger and guards and protects you from all evil.”** We can see it both on the cosmic scale and also in our lives. The solar system is designed in such a way that it protects life on Earth, keeping all the flying deadly objects away from us and enabling us to live in safety and peace.

Now you are comfortably sitting and listening to this sermon, but don't forget that right now, where we are, our planet spins with the speed of roughly 1000 km per hour. Not just that, you are also traveling around the Sun with the speed of more than 100.000 km per hour. Do you feel safe?

Yes, we do, for God the Father guards you. The same is true in our daily life, the same is true about all the numerous spiritual assaults that the evil one is conspiring against us. Rejoice and be glad, for you are protected by God who is your Father.

But why does He do all of this, if we are such arrogant, foolish and ungrateful creatures? **“All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us.”** Because regardless of how rebellious and how unworthy we are, He loves us. He loves you. He does. This much about God who is our Father in heaven and who generously and graciously cares for us.

But then the true God reveals Himself as God the Son, we know Him as Jesus from Nazareth. And that is only because of Jesus that we can call God our Father. The truth is that without Jesus we couldn't know much about the true God at all.

He is the One who reveals to us the Trinity. **This Jesus is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary [and He is] your Lord.** What does that mean? It means that **He has redeemed you, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won you from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil...**

Remember the price He paid? **Not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that you may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness...**

This is your God's attitude and hopes for you. Not only He reveals Himself to you, but He does everything to rescue you from our slavery to sin, death and devil. To accomplish His mission, the Son of God sacrifices His life. He does it for you.

So that He could have you with Him. In His family. Now and forever. He becomes your true Brother and brings you to share in His Kingdom, so that you could live with Him where He is in everlasting joy and blessedness.

We cannot know on our own what the true God is like, we cannot know His heart unless we know Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But then we cannot know the Son of God and trust in Him and rely on Him and desire to be with Him unless the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, comes to us and creates new hearts in us.

How so? **Because you cannot by your own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, your Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called you by the Gospel, enlightened you with His gifts, sanctified and kept you in the true faith.** See, this is so important.

You cannot know the true God on your own. We are not even capable of looking for Him. We are dead in our sins, hostile enemies of our God, enslaved and driven by our passions and idols. Wilfully choosing not to know Him. Rejecting Him.

It is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who comes down to us, He gently changes us and leads us to Jesus, God's only Son. Unless we hear the Good News about the forgiveness that God the Father grants us because of what Jesus did for us – taking blame for all our sins – we cannot even desire to know the true God, even less to trust Him or to desire to be with Him.

Brothers and Sisters, you are here and you listen to this sermon only because the Holy Spirit has called and is calling you by the Gospel. **In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.**

**In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all your sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise you and all the dead, and give eternal life to you and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.** This is what our God wholeheartedly hopes for your future.

The Holy Trinity... God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is tragic, when so many refuse His invitation, when our sinfulness blinds us and we don't know the true God. For in Him we all live and move and have our being.

Jesus not only reveals the Father to us, He also reconciles us with the Father. The sin that separated us and doomed us to eternal death is dealt with, now you have free access to the holy God. It is only possible through Jesus, not through some idea about God. As Jesus says: "I am the way."

And all these divine treasures are made available to you as God the Holy Spirit indwells in you, when He creates the most intimate bond between you and the Son and the Father, when you are welcomed and embraced by the Trinity.

Without knowing the Triune God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit all that awaits us is death and destruction. But with Him the blessed and joy-filled life in New restored Creation in God's very presence, it becomes yours... forever.

Amen.