

May 31st, 2026

“What gets God out of bed?” Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The Trinity Sunday. The Triune God. God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. One God and three divine Persons. The greatest of mysteries, the only true God Himself! What could be more exciting than getting to know Him?!

He is the beginning and He is our ultimate destination. The Alpha and the Omega. We could say that every Sunday is Trinity Sunday. Why? Because we begin the Divine Service in the name of God the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In His name we receive the forgiveness of all our sins through our Pastors. To the Father we pray through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our faith in the Triune God we confess with the Creed. On behalf of the Triune God Pastors speak His Law and Gospel.

That is our Triune God who listens to our prayers. That is Him who comes to us in the Lord's Supper and with the blessings of the Triune God we leave the Father's house. Forgiven, nourished, blessed, ready to joyfully extend His blessings to others. Our Divine Service is all about the Triune God through and through.

As are our home devotions, when we lift our prayers to the Father of our Lord Jesus enabled by His Holy Spirit indwelling in us. Our entire lives are about this Triune God. He knows everything, He is in charge, “in Him we live and move”, and... there are so many complaints that we may want to submit to Him. One day...

Today this is our opportunity to meditate on some of the questions related to this mysterious divine Being which may come up from time to time. So, this is what I invite you to consider. **How can we know the only true God?** How can we know anything about Him? How can we be sure that what we know is true?

But then also, **what do we know about this only true God?** What does it mean to know Him? Do we really know Him, or have we just heard about Him? This is a very important question to ask ourselves. And in the context of today's reading from Matthew 28 we could ask - **what makes this God to get out of bed in mornings?** What drives Him?

First, how can we know anything about the one true God. We have reflected on this. How could we know? By observing this created reality. By formulating some conclusions based on what we observe. But we can't know much more than that there must be something, or Someone out there, behind everything that exists, and this Someone must be rather powerful. But if that is true, if there is, indeed, such a Being who existed before

May 31st, 2026

time and space, matter and energy were brought into existence, how the heck could we learn or know anything about that being?! But to know about Him we want. Always have. We don't want to be in limbo, we want some answers, some explanations, and so we came up with our ideas, with our attempts to make sense of what we observe and experience. That is how we have invented all the religions and philosophies in the world. And that's why we can put all of them into one bag - a trash bag... and place it where that bag belongs. They are worth nothing when it comes to helping us to know this Being, they are nothing more than our futile attempts to grasp what we can't on our own. This is why God's Self-revelation to us in His Word is so radically different. There is only one way we could know that almighty and eternal Being. That is, if that Being decided to communicate with us and to reveal Himself to us.

How would He communicate with us? Perhaps there may be other ways too, but this is the obvious one. Who are the only creatures with whom we can communicate? Humans. That's right. And that is exactly what the only true God did.

He came to us as one of us, as a human creature. Conceived in mother's womb, formed and knitted together for nine months, born as a vulnerable baby, fed at Mary's breasts, carried in her loving arms, taught our ways by His parents. Jesus from Nazareth.

"No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." [John 1:18] As Jesus said: **"If you had known me, you would have known my Father also... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."** [John 14:7, 9] The only true God, eternal and almighty so wanted you to know Him, and now He has revealed Himself so that you could know Him through Jesus from Nazareth.

Which leads to our next set of questions. **What do we know about this only true God?** What does it mean to know Him? Do we really know Him, or have we just heard about Him? This is one of the most important questions you need to answer yourself.

Let's begin with what we do know. The only true God reveals Himself as one God. **"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."** [Deut. 6:4] But then He also appears as the Angel of Yahweh, who speaks and acts as God, and as the Spirit of God. There was already in the Old Testament time the recognition that even as the true God is one, He may be something entirely different than what we can imagine.

Then, in the fullness of time, the only true God revealed Himself as who He is. One God, three divine Persons. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He revealed Himself most clearly in Jesus' baptism as recorded in all four Gospel accounts and then He gave us His Name as He sent His Church with the Great Commission, as we heard it in our today's Gospel reading.

All the so called ecumenical, or universally accepted Christian Creeds – the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian - confess that this is who the true God has revealed Himself. They are rooted in the Bible, painting for us the Self-portrait of the Triune God.

May 31st, 2026

However, here we come to the heart of our question. Do you *know* the only true God? People may say: “Yes, I believe in God. I believe God exists. I believe Jesus Christ was a real person. I believe that the true God is who the Bible and the Creeds reveal Him to be. Yes, I believe all that.” That is nice, but... not enough.

That doesn't answer the question – do you *know* Him? We could almost conclude that if that is all that someone can say about God, then they really don't know Him. They may have heard about Him, they may have learned what the Biblical teaching about God is, that He is one God, but also that He is Trinity. Not enough! That is not knowing Him!

But He wants you to know Him. When the Triune God reveals Himself to you, He doesn't reveal Himself in some general way, He reveals Himself to each one of you personally. One to one. And He does it in a very particular way.

When He comes to you and introduces Himself, it is a very personal encounter. He says to you: “I am so glad to meet you! I am your God. This is how I want you to know me, as your God.” Not in some general sense as a God who fits certain descriptions.

When the Triune God comes to you and introduces Himself, that is not just an exchange of information. That is not like someone giving you their business card and saying: “I am a lawyer, or a builder, or whatever... if I can be of any assistance, here are my contact details. These are my professional services. Pray if anything!”

When the Triune God comes to you and introduces Himself that is more like this. As if you were kidnapped from the hospital where you were born. You didn't know your family. And now you meet this person who beams with love looking at you and says:

“I am your Father, I gave you life and I have been looking for you all this time, waiting for this moment. I am your Brother, our Father sent me to find you and to rescue you from your captors and to bring you back home. I gave my life so that only I could bring you back home. Welcome, dear child, welcome dear brother, welcome dear sister!”

When the Triune God comes to you and introduces Himself, He throws His arms around you, He embraces you in Divine Fellowship with Him. He makes home with you. Dr Luther has captured this reality so well in His explanation of the Apostles' Creed in the Small Catechism. He highlights that it is not enough, that is not knowing God if we only have heard about Him. To know the only true God is to know Him as He wants to be known, that is - as your God. Your God! Just listen to this... and repeat to yourself!

“I believe [I know] that God has made **me** and all creatures. He has given **me** my body and soul... and all things... and still preserves them. He provides **me** richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life. He protects **me** from all dangers and guards **me** and preserves **me** from all evil. He does all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me”. More: “I believe [I know] that Jesus Christ [...] is **my** Lord. He has redeemed **me** [...] purchased and won **me** from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. He did this [...] so that **I** may be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and

May 31st, 2026

blessedness [...] Keep going: “The Holy Spirit has called **me** by the Gospel, enlightened **me** with His gifts, sanctified and kept **me** in the true faith. [...] He daily and richly forgives all **my** sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise up **me** and all the dead and will give eternal life to **me** and to all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.”

Keep reminding yourself whatever happens and never forget what the Triune God says to you with the 1st Commandment: “**I am the Lord your God!**” He is *your* God, and He wants you to know Him, to truly know Him as *your* God, your Creator, your Redeemer.

That much about knowing this Triune God. Now briefly about something that is important for all of us. You may have heard those questions: “What makes you get out of bed? Meaning, what motivates, what drives you?”

Those are about the purpose, about the meaning of our lives. **What about our Triune God? What makes Him get out of bed in the morning?** Any thoughts? We don’t need to guess; His entire Self-revelation clearly testifies what drives Him. His love for His favorite creatures, that is, us!

Remember, what is the context of His most impressive Self-revelation in the Old Testament? When does He reveal His Name to His people? Yes, His rescue mission, delivering His chosen people from the bondage of slavery.

Where does the Triune God reveal Himself the most clearly as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the New Testament? Yes, at Jesus’ baptism! When Jesus takes on His ultimate mission to deliver God’s beloved from the bondage to sin, death and the devil.

Where is the Name of God for the first time fully spelled out in the Bible? In the account which we heard today. What is the context? The Risen Lord Jesus Christ sending His apostles as representatives of the New Israel, of His Church, with the universal rescue mission of all His beloved from every corner of the world.

We only know the Triune God because He is a God on mission. He is a God who so loves His little creatures that He comes Himself to rescue us so that we may be His own. And what a privilege it is to know this God! And what a privilege it is to be embraced by Him and to be able to partake in that mission that makes our God get out of bed!

So, yes, Brothers and Sisters, you do know the only true God. You know Him through His Self-revelation in His Son Jesus. You do know Him as your God. As your God! You do know Him as God who so loves you that He not only Himself came to rescue you but also allows you to participate in His great rescue mission. As He is our God on mission, we are His people on mission. To love what He loves. To participate in what He does.

May He grant us that we can also share His drive, His motivation. May the same love for our fellow humans and their salvation and the hope for eternal life together in New Earth and New Heaven make us get out of bed. May knowing this God and being His fellow missionaries, fill your lives with divine joy and delight in His Gospel. All glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! Amen.

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