Pentecost 1 – Trinity Sunday – Year A

The question I ask myself each time I sit down with the Scriptures is, what truth do these words speak to me, to us, today? What is God telling me about Godself in these readings? When a set of readings are grouped together – as they are each Sunday by our use of the Common Lectionary – the church gives us a particular lens through which to view the readings, a guide, if you will, for how we might look at the scriptures at hand. *Sometimes* we even have a “title” or theme that the church gives us explicitly. Today we have “Trinity Sunday” – a subject so daunting that preachers avoid it – and Wayne “traded” my preaching this Sunday for his celebrating Eucharist at Emmaus *next* Sunday.

So with that “lens” of the Trinity – let us look at today’s Scriptures. With the Trinity in mind, for the first time, when I read the opening lines of Genesis preparing for today - I saw the Trinity expressed. In the reading from Genesis, at the very beginning of the Hebrew scripture – we have the writer’s understanding of God, and God’s revelation of Godself. “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said…”

God is creator… A “wind” comes from God… and “then God said…” That is, God speaks God’s Word.

From the beginning, then, God is revealed as the Source of All Being…what Jesus names as ‘the Father.’ Everything that is, flows forth from God, the creator. And it is not hard for us to associate the “wind from God” sweeping over the face of the waters with the presence of what we have come to call ‘the Holy Spirit.’ The Hebrew word “ruah” *means* wind, breath, spirit. So the wind from God, and God’s breath breathed into creation giving it life, *are* the Spirit of God. And then God *said*… God spoke. From here, it is not a great leap to the Prologue, the beginning, of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word…and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God…” The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him…”

That’s exactly what Genesis tells us: In the beginning, God spoke – and everything that came to be, *came to being* through God speaking it – through God’s word. In John’s Gospel, that “word” of God gets a capital W - And then John moves us into what the Christian community had come to experience and believe: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us…”

Voila! The Trinity – right there in the very first lines of Genesis! Of course, the writer of the Genesis story was certainly not conscious of or intent on expressing a Trinitarian notion of God, but there it is: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –or to use other language, the Source of All Being, the Eternal Word made Flesh, and the Holy Spirit. And it only took until the 4th century of the Common Era to formulate it as a “Doctrine” of the church. We put it in the creed, and it became so. And since that time, arguments and explanation about what the “doctrine” of the Trinity really means fill volumes of theological text books. But even if we could understand them, I doubt that it would change us.

And change – transformation – is what Jesus commissions us to be about in the Gospel for today. “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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always…”

That “great commission” has often been used by “Christians” as a license to try to force others into becoming Christian. After all, Jesus told us to MAKE disciples out of everyone, right? It was great justification for the crusades and for a ‘missionary’ approach that equated Western and European culture with true Christianity. But when I sat with those words, when I ruminated with them… chewing over and over… what came to me is this: what if I stop trying to apply this to everyone “out there” – and start applying it to myself? What if *I* am the “all nations” that I need to make into a disciple? What if I am the one who needs to learn to obey everything Jesus commanded – which is really only the command to love?

It was when I read this same gospel passage from the *Complete Jewish Bible* translation – and yes, there are Jewish translations of the entire Bible including the New Testament - that it really struck home. That translation reads: “Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim [disciples], immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh [the Holy Spirit or Divine Inspiration].” ***Immersing them into the reality…of God, Father, Son, and Spirit.***

And so – what if it is I, and not some other, that needs to be *immersed into the reality of God?*

My belief in the Trinity, for me, means I believe in a God who not only created all that is, and continues that creation, but who entered into that Creation fully – in the person of Jesus the Christ. And I believe that God’s presence continues to permeate us and all of creation through the Spirit – through the very breath of God that enlivens us all. For me to be *Immersed* in that reality of God means I must give myself over to being a part of that relationship that is the Trinity: Creating, loving, and being in communion.

To be immersed into the reality of God means we must, as Paul prayed, live in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

May it be so.

* [Genesis 1:1-2:4a](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/ATrinity_RCL.html#ot1)
* [2 Corinthians 13:11-13](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/ATrinity_RCL.html#nt1)
* [Matthew 28:16-20](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/ATrinity_RCL.html#gsp1)
* [Psalm 8](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/ATrinity_RCL.html#ps1)
* *or* [Canticle 13](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/ATrinity_RCL.html#ps2) (or Canticle 2)