

“BEAUTIFUL BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS FROM THE TRIUNE GOD!”

2 Corinthians 13:11-14

This Sunday marks the END of the month of May, but it marks the beginning of a new season in the Church Year. Since Nov. 30th of 2014, we have experienced the “Festival” half of the church year beginning way back in Advent. Today begins what we refer to as the “non-Festival” half of the church year. Years ago, this season used to be called the Season of Trinity and the Sundays called 1st/2nd/3rd Sunday after Trinity. The green paraments all summer long reminded us that this was a time when we focused on the work of the Trinity.

But in the last 20+ years, this season has been referred to as the Sundays after Pentecost which is what the early church called this time between Pentecost and the end of the Church year. Today we use that term to remind us that the blessings of our faith come from the Holy Spirit (who came to the disciples on Pentecost). So now we call this season the Sundays after Pentecost, the message is still the blessings of God as revealed to us in Christ and the Spirit’s blessing that makes our own!

Today we will confess what the church fathers confessed in the **Athanasian Creed** – that there is one true God who reveals Himself as 3 Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We desperately need this confession as in this day and age of polytheism, [that is no god is any better than another] the truth of the Trinity is denied and despised.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the heart/core of our faith and the foundation of our teachings. We’re talking about the God of the Bible, not some man-made, 3-headed God, one of many among all the others, like food in a buffet line at Golden Corral. As we focus on the truth of the Trinity, let’s also focus on:

“BEAUTIFUL BOUNTIFUL BLESSINGS FROM THE TRIUNE GOD!”

1. Beautiful Grace
2. Bountiful Love
3. Blessed Fellowship

1

Paul had many up & down experiences with the Corinthians. He had spent a year and a half there after being run out of other cities. During this time, he grew close to his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul had written two previous letters, one we have (1 Cor) and one we don’t have. This 3rd letter addressed problems that had risen in the congregation. Some opposed Paul and his authority. False prophets tried to pull God’s people away from the truth. So Paul used 2 Corinthians to admonish the wrongdoers and encourage the faithful.

The God of love and peace allowed the Corinthians to live in the way Paul instructed them. They could grow together and care for each other. **FINALLY BROTHERS, GOODBYE. AIM FOR PERFECTION (Become complete). LISTEN TO MY APPEAL, BE OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU. GREET EACH OTHER WITH A HOLY KISS. ALL THE SAINTS SEND THEIR GREETINGS.** Paul uses these words to encourage and comfort the Corinthians in that fellowship of believers they shared with others. They were not alone in their struggles, but they were united as one family in the faith. They could welcome their brothers and sisters in Christ because together they shared a special faith in the Triune God.

Paul’s final words of blessing to the Corinthians have come to be called the **APOSTOLIC** (or Trinitarian) **BLESSING**. Like the O.T. Aaronic blessing we most often use asking for the Lord to bless and keep us, to shine on us, and look with favor on us, this blessing incorporates the threefold person of God as **Father, Son, and Spirit** who gives us and every believer “**BEAUTIFUL, BOUNTIFUL, BLESSINGS.**” **THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH YOU ALL.**

The first is **BEAUTIFUL GRACE**. Grace is a beautiful term. You teach your children at mealtime to fold their hands to say “grace”. Parents name their daughters “Grace”. There were 2 such students in our school this year by that name or a form of it and there are some pre-schoolers with that name.

Grace is the beautiful word that always describes the “*undeserving love of God toward us sinners.*” Why is it so undeserving? Well look at us. Luther calls us “**lost and condemned creatures**”. The Bible calls us “**dead in our transgressions and sins.**” {Eph 2:1} “**He who does what is sinful is of the devil.**” {1 Jn 3:8} Paul says: “**there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” {Rom 3:22-23} ...**nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.** {Rom 7:18} You know the point: since the time of Adam/Eve, there is nothing in any of us that is good enough or that does enough to earn God’s favor. This cancer of sin in our hearts is incurable by ourselves. And it spreads to every victim affecting the way we think, talk, and act. It’s an epidemic that no one can control or eliminate and it hits every soul that’s lived or ever will live.

Grace is beautiful because God stepped out from his throne to send His Son, Jesus to take on human flesh and step into this world. But that's why He came – to live among us, to fulfill God's law in keeping every commandment spotlessly. **He came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.** {Matt 20:28} For us to be redeemed, there had to be that perfect payment, that holy ransom that only Jesus could pay. **He made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.** {Phil 2:7-8} And he did this for you, for me, for everyone, **for Jesus is the stoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.** {1 Jn 2:2} Now you all sit in those chairs (pews) and know that **we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.** {Eph 1:7}

That **beautiful grace** says *you poor sinful creature, I am your Savior. All I've done for mankind I've done for you. My blood covers yours, you wear the robe of my righteousness. In death I will be at your side and lead you safely through into eternal life. You are my blood-bought possession now and forever. May you live each day in that beautiful grace.*

2

The second blessing from the Triune God is **BOUNTIFUL LOVE**. This comes from God the Father, the 1st Person. He created life and everything in it. He preserves us with all our needs. **He opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.** {Ps 145:16} He created our world in his image. His intention was that it stays in his image. But mankind blew that image apart. The Father could've turned his back on this world to leave it spoil in its sinful image.

So we find in the bountiful love of God something that is not found in religions that deny the Holy Trinity. For if you have a God who is a loving God and allows everyone to enter heaven by overlooking sins, then He is not a God of justice. Sins have not been paid for. And if we expect people to pay for their own sins through their works, then God is not holy or perfect. Only in the Triune God, can the Father truly show us love for the world – **that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.** {Jn 3:16}

That bountiful love says *I am your God and you are my child. I created you and though you are a sinner and walk away from Me, I will not walk away from you. I forgive you and will care for you as your Father as long as you're in the world. And when you leave, I will be the 1st One to welcome you into your eternal paradise. Trust me and be Mine until death. May you live each day in that bountiful love!*

3

The 3rd & final blessing of the Trinity is **BLESSED FELLOWSHIP**. From God the Holy Spirit the 3rd Person. We can't believe the Trinity w/o the Spirit. Luther says: **"we cannot by our own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ or come to him."** A car doesn't run w/o its battery. A commercial plane doesn't fly w/o its engines. A boat doesn't sail w/o wind. **No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.** {1 Cor 12:3}

So the Spirit has brought us into this fellowship in which we share in a relationship that's unlike any other. We usually use fellowship to mean the activities we do together as a church ie. suppers, between service coffee/donuts, meeting for social events. Yes, that does express a bond we have with each other.

But the Spirit's work bring us into a relationship with God as He called us to faith through the Means of Grace and keeps us in that faith through those same means to strengthen our faith all our days. **Without** the Spirit, we would not know Jesus. **With** the Spirit, we are made one with God and with each other. We are in fellowship in the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.

That blessed fellowship says: *I am your God and you are mine. I have given you the faith to trust in me. I will be your helper, comforter, and teacher. I will be your strength, your life, your power to remain my child until death. May you live each day in that blessed fellowship!*

The Holy Trinity – a concept so simple a child just accepts it and at the same time, no one can understand it. God is so much higher, wiser, and different than we are that He grants us these **beautiful, bountiful blessings**. 3 Persons, 1 God. May we believe in Him and live in that faith each day until our end. **AMEN**