

The Feast of the Holy Trinity

Kenneth Korby

John 16:5–15

Greeting

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord. Help me this morning because this is going to be hard work. This sermon, [unclear]. Peace of the Lord Jesus guard and keep you while we are preaching and listening.

The Point: That We Adore God

The simple point of this sermon this morning is that the revelation of God in Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is to fill you with His glory. That is the point of the sermon: is that we adore God.

The point is to live in God, not to get all the mathematics straight, but to live in God, and that comes by His Word when He creates us new creatures who are beings. That's what the sermon is about.

The God Sinners Want

For what makes it hard, what makes it tough, is that's not the kind of God we want. Sinners want a different kind of God. Sinners want a God, for example, who is a God of wrath. That way you can complain about it. He's not treating me fair. Why are kids in the world dying? How come I got sick?

We want a God of wrath so we can argue about it, or we want a God of wrath so we can say, "I've been better than the rest of the people. You give me a higher place. I'll be good if you make me rich, or I'll be good if you give me back my health. Take the cancer out of my gut so I can live."

We want a God with whom we can bargain. We don't want God to be God. We want a God in our wish fulfillment that will leave us alone.

That's what atheism is psychologically. It's a wish fulfillment theologically. It is a backward confession of faith. If you keep saying there is no God, there is no God, there is no God, well, why do you keep saying that there isn't one? Because inside there is the terror that there may be one, and so we want a God who will leave us alone.

Why do you always hang something on us? Everything I like, He doesn't like. Everything I want, He doesn't want. Everything He wants, I don't like. We want a God who will leave us alone.

Except we want a God. We who are sinners want a God who will do what we want. If we get in trouble, we'd like to say, as you hear people, "The man upstairs will help." He can come and do what we want now. We've got our mind made up on how we want to live, what we want to do with our life, how we want to treat other people. Now we want God to come and say, "I approve. I'll pay the bills, and I'm such a good fellow. I'll see to it that you're happy on time."

The God Who Does Not Ask Us

That's where the problem begins, because the God who made heaven and earth does not ask us whether we want to be. He just says, "I want you to be." He didn't ask us who our father would be, who our mother would be, whether we even had one. He didn't ask us what color we would be, whether we'd be man or woman, whether it be in a place where we could learn or a place where we would starve to death, he didn't ask that, and he puts us where we are in time.

We can't get out of the skin. We can drink enough to try to forget it, smoke enough to try to get away from it. We can run wherever we want, but the skin is always there, and he sets us next to people.

You had one mother, one woman out of the five and a half billion people in the world. One woman brought you forth because God wanted him.

He is the Lord who made heaven and earth, and that's the one that bothers us because from the time we are born, our wills collide with Him. You can take a little tiny baby; doesn't take long. Say, "No, don't do that." The will goes into effect. "I want that." Or you say, "Come and do this," and the will goes into operation. "No, I don't like that." The collision is there all the time because God is God, and we are the sinners.

The Living God and Death

This God is the living God. Death is repugnant to Him. It is revolting, and He who made us to live is the one who [unclear].

Didn't ask us when we wanted to be born, and he won't ask us when we want to die. One will live a wild, profligate life, be strong and healthy, live to old age. Someone else will be decent and be chewed up with cancer by 35, [unclear] a heart attack. Where's [unclear]? God says, "I am right here. I am taking away from you the life I gave you," and He does it to all mankind.

The God Who Chooses Mercy

This is the God who, in His own heart, chooses to be merciful to us, that is his revulsion of death, his will that there will be no evil left in us or in the world. There will be no more. He will lock it up in hell. There will be no more.

His will to do that is the will that He should become in His Son a man, a man by God, flesh and blood, sucked at His mother's breast, went to the bathroom, got sleepy, had friends, cried, got hungry, got angry, and when the hour came, roamed around in the dust, sorrowful to the point of death. He prayed, but He prayed to the Father; this Creator and Maker, by whose execution we die, is the one who gave His Son, the only begotten Son, to be a man. When it came time to die, even there His soul was turned inside out, the way [unclear] the gizzard of a chicken, because it was revolting, awful to Him, and yet He went the way.

The Pot Complains to the Potter

Though the high God who made heaven and earth, we don't want that God. Sinners prefer another God, and when we, like pot in the hands of the potter, start complaining about the potter: "You didn't make me very pretty, you know." The potter will say, "All right, you don't like it. You take this and stick this back into the ground. I'll remake you." And that's what he does when he sticks his beloved son into the ground.

The Spirit of Truth Will Guide You

"I've got many things to tell you. You can't bear them right now." You can't bear to know what's coming. He said to His disciples. Neither can we say that He will take us into life by killing us, that He will set us free from sin by condemning us, that He will forgive us after we have been refused. That is more than we can bear.

So when this comes to pass, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will teach you. This Spirit of Truth will guide you into the truth. He will not speak on his own authority. What he has heard is what he will say.

That is: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are the one God of mercy, the one God who, by suffering in the death of His Son, makes life open for us in the forgiveness of sins. That's where the Spirit leads us. He leads us to be with Christ, with Christ in His death, with Christ in His burial, with Christ in His resurrection, and He leads us with Christ to be with the Father. "Father, I pray that where I am, they may be also." That's where we are in Him, with Him.

The Spirit does not come and talk about all kinds of things. When the Spirit comes, "He will guide thee into the truth. He will take what is Mine," said Jesus, "and He will declare it to you." He'll make it yours. He'll put it into your ear by a word, into your soul by His own action, so that your heart can believe what is unbelievable, so that your heart can worship the true God and let the other gods be crucified with Jesus.

One God, Not Three

This is all one God we confess, not three gods. One God says, "I made them, but I don't like them," and the other God says, "Oh, I rather like them. I think they've got possibilities." And then these two get into a kind of quarrel with each other, and out of that comes some sort of atmosphere or spirit. And the spirit says, "Hey, you guys, can't you make up your mind? This is what I want." No, no.

"The Whole Earth Is Full of His Glory"

There is one God, and this God, the Maker, the Living God, the life-giving God, the Lord, is the one who wills to save us by His suffering. Did you hear the choir? "The whole earth is full of His glory." This isn't only the razzle dazzle beauty of the flowers, or the sky, or the stars, or the sun. Or even the more razzle dazzle beauty of a human mind, being able to build a building, or write a poem, or make music. This isn't that kind of razzle dazzle. It is all that.

But this is the glory: that when He wills to give us life, He kills death by dying. The God who executes the dead gives His beloved Son into death, and the Son, in love for His Father, wants for us what the Father wants. [unclear] one mind, one will. They're together in life, [unclear] falling apart in death. Exactly, he went into death. And it is the Spirit, God Himself, not

speaking on His own authority, but telling us from God what He has heard, telling us that Christ is ours: “He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.”

“Everything the Father Has Is Mine”

This is the God who said, “Everything that belongs to Jesus belongs to the Father.” Can you imagine that? I can.

He was a Jew. How significant are the Jews? How populous are they? We got all kinds of things we say about the Jews, especially Germans. We got all kinds of things we say about Jews, that He should be born a Jew, and that He should make plain everything that the Father has is [unclear]. What?

You can’t even buy a car. You don’t have enough money to go downtown and buy a car. He doesn’t have any except a piece of wood. He’s a carpenter. He had one piece of wood. He didn’t even have a place to lay His head until they nailed Him to the cross and stuck Him in a borrowed tomb. “Everything that the Father has is Mine. Everything.”

The Father who made you has put you into His hands. The hands [unclear] crucified, stabbed, head crowned, mocked, [unclear]. Say, “Holy [unclear], how about saving yourself next?” That’s the God we want, the one who would save Himself.

This God is merciful. He saved us. The potter says, “Well, I don’t like that pot.” And the pot says, “Well, I don’t like you either.” And the potter takes that pot and sticks it back in the mud and reworks it.

“Everything that is Mine, the Spirit will declare to you”: Jesus is yours.

Faith Is the Spirit’s Work

But that wanting Jesus is itself the work of God, of God the Spirit. It’s not something you say: “Oh, that looks like a good deal. I’ll have some fun here on earth, and I’ll be happy forever.”

That isn’t the way we work faith. We don’t make up our mind or get religious or start doing pious things in order to get God. That Spirit will take what is Mine [unclear] Jesus. He will guide you into the truth. He’ll take you to that crucifixion, to that baptismal [unclear], where you are plunged back into the earth with Him, and He will bring us [unclear], a new life.

To Worship God: The Idols Must Die

This is what the Catholic faith is about: that we worship God. To worship God first, we day after day, all day long, must say no to the idols we make. They must be [unclear]. They can't be kept carried around in the pocket, stuck in the [unclear], played with. They must be killed. But we can't. We watch them. They must be crucified with him.

Trusting His Word: A Church of Sinners

So the second thing is that you trust what he says to you. [unclear] I don't look any different from what I did yesterday. You don't look that different. What do we got here?

We've got a bunch of sinners. Christ reigns nowhere else. His church is made up of nothing else. Those who aren't sinners aren't in the church. They may think they are too good. They may think they are too bad. But they're not in the church.

The church is that new creation made of sinners. He raises us up out of that baptismal water, new creatures, creatures of faith, and he leads us, guides us into the truth.

Peace with God: Bold to Confess, Joy in Suffering

Third thing this means is that we have peace with God. We are bold. We are bold to say, in a world that is dying, and we are dying. We are bold to say, we are alive. We are alive in God. God has wrapped His name around us, and we are destined for life. "I am who I am" is our God, the living God.

In that world, furthermore, we not only are bold to confess Him, we too suffer. We suffer pain in ourselves. We suffer pain in our families. We suffer pain in our own world.

We watch others suffer, and it sometimes is worse pain for us to watch a wife dying, a child dying, a grandpapa dying. Who suffers more? Maybe we do.

But in that world, we have learned to live with joy, because in that spirit a word has been given to us. Your joy is in the Holy Spirit who has been poured into your heart. When you walk this way, you are walking the way of patience, character, and endurance, and hope. And hope does not leave you ashamed.

So to worship God is to live in the suffering of our times with the joy.

God at Work in Our Suffering

This is where God is at work. The suffering God of mercy is not absent when we are suffering. Why do I suffer? Why do people suffer? Where is God?

You can say with some boldness. Here is where He is, and this is what He is doing, he is making a new creature. That old pot is shoved back into the clay, and the new creature is coming out.

We cannot see it now; it is by hearing, not by seeing. We cannot feel it now, for we are part of the dying world. That's what we feel. But He persuades us, He who made us and bought us, persuades us by His word that this is our life.

What I wanted to do this morning with this sermon was to stir up our adoration of God. May it be so, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

SOURCE

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Transcribed from an audio recording of a sermon by Kenneth F. Korby (CTSFW Media). [unclear] marks words that could not be made out.