

SCRIPTURE READINGS AND SERMON

Trinity Sunday-Lord and Christ

June 7, 2020

Psalm 8:1–9 (ESV)

1 O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
4 what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?

5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings²
and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
7 all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

9 O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

FIRST READING: Genesis 1:1-2:4 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants^[e] yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons,^l and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man^[h] in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. **2** And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

EPISTLE: Acts 2:14 (ESV)

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Acts 2:22-36 (ESV)

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— **23** this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. **24** God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. **25** For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,

for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

my flesh also will dwell in hope.

27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,

or let your Holy One see corruption.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, **31** he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. **33** Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. **34** For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies your footstool.”’

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Trinity Sunday

“Lord and Christ”

Acts 2:14a, 22-36

Dear friends in Christ,

In our reading from Acts on this Trinity Sunday, St. Peter begins the Christian church with the first Christian sermon. This is a historic moment and worth noting. The Christian church was founded on preaching, and by preaching, I do not just mean what I am doing here right now, this formal stand-up-in-front-of-y'all thing that I do every Sunday. Peter makes a speech, sure enough, but he's not in a church. He is in a public place with a big, big crowd. The miracle of Pentecost has happened, and all the Jews who are hearing the disciples speak in human languages they couldn't possibly have learned are scratching their heads. The question that everyone is asking is recorded by Luke in verse 12 of the chapter: “What does this mean?” God is doing something big, most of the folks there seem to recognize that, but they don't get what it's about.

So Peter steps up to the plate. Simon Peter. Hold there for a second. Remember who's doing this, folks. Simon Peter. This is the same Simon Peter who denied even knowing Jesus and ran away when things got hot. This is the same Simon Peter who cowered behind locked doors with the other disciples. Now, he's standing up in front of a big crowd, one that could easily stone him, lynch him, or beat him to a pulp, but Peter stands up, opens his mouth, and changes history.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by lawless men.” Law and Gospel, clear as day and twice as hard. Peter tells them what they've done, and what they've done is pretty serious. God did all sorts of miracles through Jesus, to show that He was God and sent from God, and to get you to listen to him. But you killed him! Peter tells them. That's a heinous accusation. Men of Israel, you killed God. Peter doesn't moderate this. He doesn't play with them. He gives to them square between their teeth. God's blood is on your hands. But, as a good preacher should, Peter keeps going and expands on this.

“God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.” You tried to kill him, folks, but you can't kill God. God raised him up, and it was all in God's plan, and He knew it would happen. Now Peter does what a good preacher should do, and he goes to the Bible and uses it to show what he's talking about. **“For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken: therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your holy one see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’”**

I'm going to be straight up with you: This is not easy to explain. Peter is citing Psalm 16, and he does it in a way that probably made quite a bit of sense to the folks in his day, but requires a bit more work to understand now. Peter is saying that David was looking forward to Jesus, He was anticipating what Jesus would suffer and do for His people. He's showing them that this Jesus is the one who was always supposed to come, even David, way back in Israel's history, spoke about his coming. Peter makes this clearer as he goes on:

“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrecton of Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses.” Peter says, this psalm isn't just about David. David was talking about Christ, how Jesus had to die, had to be raised, Christ had to do all of that, and this is the one that we are witnessing to today.

The next bits are in this same vein. What Peter is doing here, friends, is building his case. He's using their Bible to prove to them that Jesus was God, Jesus was the same God that brought their forefathers out of Egypt. He's proving to them that all of these things that Jesus did that were unexpected, like dying and rising, were all part of the plan of that same God, the one they themselves are there to worship. He goes on to explain why the Pentecost miracle is happening. **“Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having rceived from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.”** Jesus is exalted, Peter says. He's not with us anymore. But what He's doing now is pouring out the Holy Spirit, that's what's going on. Peter concludes with these words: **“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”**

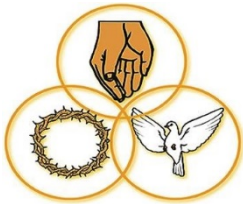
The lesson stops there, which is a shame, because it's really amazing how many of the folks listening respond to this. **“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'what shall we do?' and Peter said to them, 'repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”**

Summary time. Peter points the Jews to Christ, this is the God you worship, He says. And guess what? You killed him. You resisted him to the point of shedding His blood. The people are broken up about this, which is always the goal of this sort of preaching. Sin makes our hearts so hard, God has to break them, show us what we are, and that's what Peter does in classic style. And his response is perfect: How do you make it better? Repent and be baptized, that way God will make it better, God will make you better, wash away those sins.

The first sermon ever preached, and it still stands today. It's for you too. Did your hands drive the nails into Christ's flesh, whip His back, shove the spear into His side? No. Does that matter? No. You're just as guilty, because Christ had to suffer all that because of your sins, mine, everyone's. How do you fix that? Repent and be baptized. That's a life's work, right there. That's why we're here, to repent, and start moving forward again, to go out into the world as forgiven sinners.

Peter takes his audience, his listeners, he takes their sin, throws it in their face in a very real way. But he takes the Scriptures and shows them Jesus, that Jesus is their God, and that Jesus had it all in mind. He planned to bleed and die for the very people that were responsible for it all in the first place, the Israelites back then, and you and me today. But He did, and that belongs to us. As Peter says, Jesus Christ is Lord and Christ, He loosed the pangs of death, not just on Himself, but on us. We have life beyond death, just like He has, an eternity with Him and with all of our loved ones who have died believing in Him.

Amen.



The Athanasian Creed

The Church's Confession of the Holy Trinity

Early in the fourth century, a new teaching appeared which claimed that Jesus was not true God. Arius, the north African priest who first proposed this theory, was extremely persuasive, and soon the controversy was so widespread that a church council was called to settle the matter. Out of that meeting in A.D. 325 came the Nicene Creed, which clearly confesses Jesus to be true God. That creed, which was expanded in A.D. 381 in order to defend the divinity of the Holy Spirit, is still widely used today as a confession of the triune faith.

Despite the clarity of the Nicene Creed, the controversy continued for some time.

Toward the end of the fifth century, another creed was written that marveled at the mystery of the Trinity in a way that no creed had ever done. Though attributed to Athanasius, a fourth-century opponent of Arius, this anonymous creed clearly came at a later stage in the debate.

The Athanasian Creed proclaims that its teachings concerning the Holy Trinity and our Lord's incarnation are the catholic faith. In other words, this is what the true church of all times and all places has

confessed. More than 15 centuries later, the church continues to confess this truth, confident that the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has given himself for our salvation.

- 1 Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic* faith.
- 2 Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.
- 3 And the catholic faith is this,
- 4 that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.
- 5 For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another.
- 6 But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
- 7 Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit:
- 8 the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated;
- 9 the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite;
- 10 the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.
- 11 And yet there are not three Eternals, but one Eternal,
- 12 just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinities, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.
- 13 In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty;
- 14 and yet there are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.
- 15 So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;
- 16 and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.
- 17 So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;
- 18 and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.
- 19 Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.
- 20 The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.
- 21 The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.
- 22 The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

- 23 Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
- 24 And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;
- 25 but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things, as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.
- 26 Therefore, whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity.
- 27 But it is also necessary for everlasting salvation that one faithfully believe the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 28 Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.
- 29 He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; and He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age:
- 30 perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh;
- 31 equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity.
- 32 Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ:
- 33 one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God;
- 34 one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
- 35 For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ,
- 36 who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead,
- 37 ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
- 38 At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.
- 39 And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.
- 40 This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

*universal, Christian

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