

Trinity Sunday

Preacher: Billie Lyn Jensen
June 10, 2001

Canticle 13

Isaiah 6:1-8

Revelation 4:1-11

John 16:(5-11)12-15

(In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.)

When my daughters were little, they simply couldn't leave me alone to enjoy an uninterrupted telephone conversation. It must involve something universal, because now that my own daughters have babies, I find that a part of every conversation with her also involves a conversation with the youngest member of the family.

Invariably, it starts off with a simple, "Hi."

Does she know that it's Grandma who's speaking to her? Probably not, even though her mommy holds the phone to her ear and says, "Listen...It's Grandma. Say, 'Hi, Grandma!' "

Someday, God willing, she'll hear me and form a picture in her mind of who I am. And hopefully, the picture that she forms will be one of a grandmother who is very nice...and who loves her very, very much.

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And that, you see, is the point of Trinity Sunday (which today is, by the way): to recognize God as He reveals Himself to us. That revelation can happen at any time and in any place.

Last week, for example, it happened to me while I was sitting in front of the television set...when something inside of me drew my attention away from the T.V. and invited me to "listen" to the sound of a very strong wind blowing through the trees.

My goodness, I thought. Has the wind been blowing all this time and I failed to hear it? And as I listened to the wind, I also heard someone mowing a lawn somewhere...and birds singing...and countless other sounds...songs...going on, all at the same time.

Those sounds must have been around when I was little--when I was a small baby lying in my crib--but then they had no individuality, like my voice on the phone to my young granddaughter. I'd not yet learned to distinguish the individuality of each sound; so, to me, they were all "one"...like One God.

Trinity Sunday is a day devoted to the individuality of God...the 3-ness of His Being, as it were. And since I volunteered to give this sermon LAST Trinity Sunday, I've had a whole year to think about the subject and jot down ideas. Consequently, just before the television incident, I had announced to my husband that I could talk for ten years on the subject!

He, being a practical man, suggested that a good sermon should only last for about 10 minutes. So...you've gotten a reprieve...But for most of the year, my ideas have centered around the concept of seeing the Trinity in the world around us: to take what was "One" and isolate and recognize its individual parts, much as I had isolated the sounds of the wind and the lawn mower and the bird.

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I knew that any creation bears the imprint of its creator...be it a child, a painting, or a universe. (After all, any art expert can tell a Van Gogh from a Matisse...by its color, its brush strokes, and the quality of its style.) So, why not look at the imprint of our God on this creation? This canvas? An easy enough job, by the way. The Trinity is everywhere! Maybe because God wants there to be something for everyone. (You'll be happy to hear that I won't be talking about all of them, by the way. I've limited myself to only seven.)

- (1) For example, we live in a 3-dimensional space; it has depth, breadth, and height...3 directions, 1 space.
- (2) Why, time itself is a 3-in-1 proposition: It has a past, present, and future.

And, if you look around, you'll realize that

- (3) Within this universe, all objects have at least 3 states: a solid, liquid, and a gas.

I've often thought that the hardness of a solid can be likened to the seemingly unbending/unchanging **God of the Old Testament**,

while liquids remind me of His Son, **Jesus**, who give the water of Life. And gas, like the air in which we live and move, breathe and have our being is akin to the **Holy Spirit**. After all, it was the misty cloud...the smoke...found in the Old Temple of Jerusalem that indicated God's presence.

- (4) Believe it or not, the Trinity can also be seen in television sets, especially by those who build them...

If you check the dots on the screen, you'll find that all the colors that we see are composed from 3 primary colors of light: red, green, and blue, like today's reading in the book of Revelation.

- (5) This visible spectrum is really composed of something called "wave lengths" and is a part of what is known as the electromagnetic spectrum, which (by the way) also has 3 parts.

There are the high energy waves, such as x-rays...you know...those things that can see inside of you (like **God the Father**, who can see into your heart); the mid level range, which consists of the visible light (obviously **Jesus**-like); and the low energy waves that give off heat and produce the communication bands (like the **Holy Spirit** who came like a flame and gave everyone an understanding of what was being said on Pentecost).

- (6) And...did you know that the very shape of everything that we see is composed of 3 parts? Why, even the pews on which you're sitting...

Everything has an inside, an outside, and a boundary that defines where one stops and the other begins. This concept is so universal, that it is a fundamental law of mathematics: The Law of Trichotomy.

But the brush strokes of The Master can be seen even closer to home.

- (6) All we need to do is look at something which was made in His image: each one of us. Because...the Lord our God is One!

There's a part of each of us that can't be seen or heard by another human being: our thoughts and daydreams, the stuff that

transcends time, itself. For me, this inner being is much the same now as it was when I was a child. It's a part of me that never seems to grow old...and never seems to change, like **God the Father**.

You can't perceive this inner being...unless I somehow communicate it to you. Perhaps I "speak" about who I really am through my actions, my deeds, my day-to-day living. These "words" are my own creation...like a child born into the world, but having only one parent...created from who I am. It is the "word become flesh"...or...the word that allows you to see and understand what was previously unseen; and as such, can be likened to **God the Son**.

But, before you can really "see" ME"...before you can know the TRUTH about who I AM, there must be a connection between the 2 of us...And a "connection" implies something we have in common. In its most mechanical form, it might be my breath, which carries the sound waves of my voice to your ears. In fact, in both the Old and New Testaments, the word for breath is "spirit." So, the breath that carries God's Truth can be likened to the **Holy Spirit**.

In other words, each of us is created in the image of a triune God.

An unseen essence inside of us (God the Father)
Made visible by the words of truth (God the Son)
And carried from one individual to another
on the very breath of our being (God the Holy Spirit).

But...even with this example...and all the other examples in the world...we are still not able to comprehend the fullness of God.

Why?

Because He is not just the Trinity, as seen in the universe...any more than an artist is just the brush strokes we see on his or her canvas. God's reflection in this world can't hold a candle to the real thing...any more than a drawing of a tree can compare to the 50-foot Maple that shades my back yard. He's more than what appears to be the sum of His parts. We only see the Trinity when we're looking from the "outside"...at the boundary of our God. Whatever else He is, it's a sure bet that it's what's

inside that counts. And when looking from the inside, the Lord our God is One. One in the Trinity, yes...But also One in Love, Peace, Truth, Consoler---How many adjectives can we name?--Righteous Judge, Creator, Father...

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He's all of these things...and more...all at once...like the one sound that was composed of so many things...and a single word that can hold so many meanings. Why...even last week's single experience in front of the television set held more than one lesson in it. (That's the way it is with God!)

Yes, I was made to stop, as the still small voice inside of me said, "Listen"...but I was also reminded of a time, 21 years ago...yesterday, to be exact, when my youngest daughter (then a 4-year old child) and I were alone in a field picking strawberries.

*"Listen," I'd said.
"Listen to the wind."*

*And she stopped and listened, too.
"Look at the trees...far away over that hill. Can you see them move?"
And she nodded.*

The far off leaves rustled...first faintly, then louder and louder, as the chorus was joined by grass and bushes.

We watched the stillness of a few minutes before...change into a movement that moved the trees in the distance and swept past us...covering a larger and larger area.

"The wind is like God, you know," I said as I knelt motionless at my work.

"You can't see the wind, but you can see the things that it touches...because they move. And sometimes it makes the things that it touches 'speak'...like the leaves on those trees.

*"Listen..." [I'd said].
"What do you think they're saying?"*

And her tiny face turned in the direction of the wind before turning back to me with an impish smile on her face...and her answer was sure and simple.

"Hello," she said.

* * *

And there it was, again...that single word..."Hi."

Listen...

Was it really the wind?

Do we really know who it is who speaks so gently to our hearts?...who's been calling us since we were very young? Probably not, even though we've been told time and again that it's God. We're still very young, too, you know.

But someday, God willing, we'll hear Him, and form a picture in our minds of who He is. And then we'll know, without any doubt at all He is our Heavenly Father...and that He's very nice...and, yes, that He loves us very, very much.

Amen.