



ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

Trinity Sunday, May 26th, 2013

The passage selected for the Sermon this morning is taken from the Gospel:

“If I have told you of earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things.” St. John 3:12

**In the Name of the Father ✠ and of the Son
and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.**

In the Epistle, St. John gives a vivid but incredible vision of heaven. In the Gospel, Our Lord tells Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel and seeker of the Truth, that to see that Kingdom of God, Man must be born again by water and the Spirit. Of course that birth is the birth of Baptism. St. Matthew, at the end of his Gospel, records Jesus providing the form of Baptism. “Go ye, therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” (St. Matthew 28:19) The Name by which we are reborn is the Name of God, the Holy Trinity, and today, Trinity Sunday, we celebrate the Revelation of God’s Name to His Chosen people of the New Covenant.

In fact, we celebrate more than just a Sunday dedicated to the Name of God, we celebrate the beginning of a season. Trinity season is the longest season of the year, taking a full half of the calendar. And yet, though we spend half of our lives in Trinity season, we spend very little time contemplating the Trinity. Like Nicodemus, we are earthbound in our search for God, and these visions of heaven, the

ecstatic Revelation of God’s Name, is so difficult to approach with the human mind, that we often don’t bother to contemplate this incredible and mystical gift.

We believe in One God. We believe in three Persons in one God. We do not believe in three gods, and we do not believe that one God has three facets, or three relationships to man, or just seems like 3 persons. The Persons are distinct from each other and one in God. We are made persons in the image of God, and are animated by the breath of His Spirit. Jesus, by his Incarnation and Resurrection, has perfected our nature as Persons, and made us one in Him as He is one with the Father. Though these truths may seem difficult to approach by means of logic and experience, we can know them to be true by faith, and understanding these revelations, even by our imperfect tools, is critical to our salvation.

In the Covenant of the Old Testament, God chooses to Himself a particular people, and He demonstrates His adoption of these people by revealing His Name to them. They know Him, the One and True God, as “I am that I am.” It is

a holy and unspeakable name to those who are corrupted by sin and under the dominion of Satan. But throughout the Old Testament, God holds out a promise to His people that they will know Him more truly. 144 times He says to them, I am the Lord your God, I am the God of your Fathers, and I will be your God, and you will be my people.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man comes to fulfill that promise by redeeming us, and making us new persons and a new people. He reveals to His Chosen people, that the Name of God is “the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”. He shows us how the Covenant promise is fulfilled by that name.

“I am the Lord, the God of your Fathers” is revealed to be the Father. He is the First Person of the Trinity, the source of Creation, and Light and Love. It is the Father that adopts Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all their seed, as imperfect as they are, and provides the means to make them perfect.

“I will be your God” is the Revelation of the Son, the second person of the Trinity, by whom all things were made, who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made man. How is it that we could not belong to the one who created us? The answer is that in making us in His image, unique among Creation, God gave us the will to choose to serve Him, or to serve ourselves. In the sin of Adam, and in our own daily sin, we exercise the will to choose Death and Satan over Life and God.

We are unable, by our own effort to throw off the chains we have placed upon ourselves. Because we have chosen not to be the children and people of God, we cannot escape those bonds by our own effort, or work or will. But God loves us and pities us.

The Son becomes a man, so that a Man can become perfect, and glorify God by obeying His will. It is through Jesus Christ that Man is restored to God, through Water and the Spirit that we are re-born. Through His death and Resurrection, our death is transformed from an unavoidable destination, to the door through which we enter everlasting life in Him.

“And you will be my people” is the Holy Ghost. By our Baptism in the Name of the Trinity, we are restored as children of God. Children that retain the image of God, including

a free will that allows us to serve God and do His will, or to serve ourselves and return to Satan and to Death. We children, left on our own, would likely make the same tragic and irreversible decision that has been made before. But in His love, The Son sends us the Holy Spirit to witness to the Truth of our Salvation in Jesus, to embody and personify the love of the Son for us, and the Love that the Father has for us, because we love His Son. By the Holy Spirit, we are sanctified, strengthened and directed so that we can persevere up to, and through, the fearsome gate of death, to realize the promise of life that has been reserved for us in Christ.

All of Creation, All of History, All of Scripture, is revealed to us in the Name of God, by knowing who He is, and by knowing the Persons in Him. We understand in the Father the source and purpose of our Creation. In the Son we realize the un-imaginable depth of our Father’s love, “that He would give His only Son to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”. In the Holy Ghost we learn the means by which we are preserved in our lives and times so that we can be delivered to the heavenly destination to which we have been made heirs in Christ.

It is the particular and unique grace of Christians to know the Name of God, and to know the Persons of the Trinity. It is a gift that bears appreciation, meditation and prayerful thanksgiving. It is a gift that can’t be unwrapped, appreciated and absorbed in just a moment. And so, our Mother, the Church, in her inspired Wisdom, gives us a whole season, the better part of the year to ponder the mystery.

Nicodemus looked for God in earthly terms and failed to know Him, even though he heard His voice and touched His hand. Let us firmly resolve to search for God by heavenly aspirations, in the Name He reveals to us, so that we can know Him. Let us dedicate this season to prayerful and humble consideration of the Blessed Trinity, which is the Name of God, the purpose of Creation, the expression of God’s incredible Love for us, and the means by which we learn our duty and do His will.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*