

The Trinity Is To Be Worshiped! John 8:48-53

“As the day of Christ approaches, may you be blessed through His word, and may you treasure its content, as it tells you of the grace, the love and the peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, poured out on you through the Spirit!”

The of words of today’s Gospel are what we would call **“Ancient Words.”** words sting, and if we are honest, when we first hear them, these ancient words set off warning bells in our minds. They seem too critical, too judgmental, and in this age too intolerant.

We would try to find a way to dismiss them, to by-pass them, and perhaps even ignore them. Last week was gr3eat as we heard the Account of Pentecost and witnessed the Confirmation of three sisters. But even in the Gospel for last week you may have felt a bit uncomfortable. **You and all of us were being called out to do what God has empowered you to do with the power of the Holy Spirit.** The account of Pentecost reminds each one of us is responsible for the spreading of the Gospel. **How could it be that we who are supposed to be enlightened people still believe in what was taught fourteen to sixteen hundred years ago.** How could these still be used as a guideline for our churches today, declaring that **only those who hold to a certain complex understanding are saved?** For that is what they appear to state, what we a moment ago confessed. **“Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic /apostolic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally.”**

Harsh words, that lead into a creed that is hard to understand until it is taken apart and chewed on, until we examine it closely, and understand what is written. Some of you have only heard those words this morning – so how can you confess them? Most of the rest of us only use this creed every so many years. Some churches us this once a year – **this particular week, as we celebrate that God revealed Himself to us as both One, and yet Three. The words beg to be considered, yet our hearts struggle with the idea that such a complexity could be so critical to our salvation.**

There is part of each of us, that absolutely hates when we don’t know where we are going, or what we are doing. We don’t like it, when we are not in complete control, when we cannot manipulate our situation in a way we prefer. **Such is the reason we hate doctor’s offices, and dread the chair at the dentist, and probably why we don’t like lawyers and judges. These situations include discussions in languages that are beyond our vocabularies, and make decisions we feel we have no active part in. We are helpless.**

SO it was with the Jewish people, who thought they needed to confront Jesus because His teaching was so challenging, and yet the miracles seem to call for them to make some kind of judgment. **The challenge is that they thought they understood God, after all they studied his word and they had the temple, and they were Jewish and not Samaritans or Gentiles.** They did all the right things, they sang all the right psalms, they kept all the festivals, and yet, Jesus will say, **“It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ 55But you have not known him.”**

In saying that they don’t know him – Jesus will use a word that is incredibly intimate – focusing on knowledge based on experience. **They know of God, and yet they don’t know Him.** Should they have been able to process their knowledge, they would have seen their worship vain and empty, they would have realized that Herod’s majestic temple was a sham. Their actions there were but a falsehood designed to appease the God that they claimed to follow. **The God who was standing there, in their midst!**

And they would try to kill them, even as He was showing them His plan, for them, and for us. He wasn’t a tame God, and even though the Old Testament scriptures spoke of Him, and His love for them so clearly, they couldn’t wrap their minds around the concept of God walking among them.

Unfortunately we haven’t made all that much progress since then either. We still want a god that is controllable, that is easily defined. We desire a faith that can be reduced to a list of behaviors, the do these things, and don’t do these things, and even then, we want that list in our control, judged by our reason, our logic.

We want what C.S. Lewis called a **“tame” God. But a tame God isn’t God. He is simply a false god created in our image, that we can play God. The ultimate example of the sin proscribed in the first commandment – you shall have no other gods...**

God reveals Himself to be anything but tame. He is complex, and full of paradoxes, from the Trinity to **Jesus being 100% God, and 100% man.** He tells us He washes us clean of all sin, as we are joined to His

death and resurrection, in our very own baptisms. He proclaims His death for us, as we take and eat His body in and under the bread and wine, and drink the blood shed for our forgiveness in and under the wine.

The thing that the Jewish people got wrong, that we still struggle with, **is that God doesn't want just a people that robotically obey every command. He wants a people that are in a relationship with Him! The creeds don't demand our intellectual assent to some propositions about God, they reveal to us the character of the God who calls us into a relationship with Him. A relationship noted for our trust in Him, and His faithfulness to the promises promised to the Old Testament people like Abraham, and manifested at the cross.**

And the catholic/orthodox/universal faith is this, **that we worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, Worship** – that means there is a relationship there, and that we adore Him, as He has revealed His love towards us, His people, that He has gathered, cleansed, and made His children.

The rest of the Creed tells us of this incredible God, how magnificent, how unsearchable, how uncontrollable, how merciful and loving. That is why we keep and treasure His word. It is not because it tells us that if we don't behave we will be zapped. It is because it reveals His attitude toward us, His love. A love that is so incredible that we cannot measure it. Love that would drive Jesus to die within sight of the Temple. To die for the very people that tried to stone Him, that tried to control Him.

That love is glorious, wonderful, amazing, and it too cannot be fully contemplated or measured. It can be basked in, and rejoiced in, and the one who loves us, praised and worshipped and glorified. Even as Abraham rejoiced when he realized what God had promised, so long ago.

That love means we will be welcome in the same place Isaiah spoke of, in the gathering that John describes in Revelation. **A place beyond our ability to imagine, so incredible is the glory of God.**

Yet it will be our home, together with saints from every language, every tribe, every tongue, every time. Home with a God who defies description, save that which He himself revealed. Hear o people of God, the Lord your God is One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May the peace of God, which like His Triune nature is beyond all comprehension, guard your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus.

AMEN!