

Trinity Sunday
Year B

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 29

Romans 8:12-17

John 3:1-17

While the reading from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome may make the case for the existence of a triune God more clearly than the passage from John's Gospel, the passage from John's Gospel gives us a good look at Jesus and how His contemporaries viewed Him. Nicodemus is a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews. He is a Pharisee. By coming to Jesus in the night, Nicodemus shows that he is trying to understand who Jesus is while being afraid of his colleagues. In this, he probably represents many Jews of that time. But, as we see later in this same gospel, Nicodemus progresses in his belief - first by standing up in the Sanhedrin and stating that Jesus should not be arrested without a hearing and, then after the crucifixion, joining Joseph of Arimathea in caring for the body of Jesus. In this, Nicodemus may represent all of us as we progress through our relationship with Jesus.

Many times, we can only grasp truths through intimate discussions like the one Nicodemus has with Jesus. He came to Jesus in the night, avoiding the criticism he knew he would receive from his colleagues. But he also came at a time when he knew Jesus would be available for a serious conversation. He felt that need to understand what he had heard and the only way forward was to have this conversation.

This story about Jesus and Nicodemus is about relationships - ours with God. But the Trinity is all about relationships - that relationship between the Three Persons of the Trinity. Jesus points out that any relationship with God must begin with a new birth - an acknowledgment that a major change needs to happen that can only be brought about by the Holy Spirit. While we might agree with Nicodemus that this is a hard concept to understand, Jesus assures us that God will aid us in this rebirth - it is not something we can do on our own.

The heart of God's relationship with us is summed up in the final verses of this passage: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." But the passage doesn't end with only a promise of eternal life. It continues, "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him." This is a promise for all the world, even as Jesus told the disciples at the Ascension to go into all the world preaching the Gospel.

We may not be able to wrap our minds around the concept of the Trinity. This whole three-in-one idea may be well over our heads. But, we can see throughout scripture the role each of the Three Persons play in our lives in our relationship with God. In our baptism, we follow Jesus' command to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We pray to God our Father in the prayer Jesus taught us, and we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We may not understand it, but the Trinity is at the core of all our beliefs. Thus, each

year we spend a little time exploring this belief, not to understand it, but to increase our faith in the Triune God.