

A little boy on the Art Linkletter show years ago answered the ancient question of which came first—the chicken or the egg. "The chicken had to come first," he said, "because God can't lay eggs." His answer is probably as good as any other.

There are many things in life and even in Christian faith that none of us can adequately understand. I am reminded of a quotation I picked up. I am not even certain who first said it, but it goes like this:

Birds do not sing because they have an answer, they sing because they have a song!

When we come to worship, it does not mean that we have all the answers. **It means simply that we have a song.**

We do not understand how the God of all creation could empty himself and become the Babe of Bethlehem. We do not understand how a crude cross erected by Roman soldiers on the top of a hill outside Jerusalem 2,000 years ago could save the world from its sin. We do not understand how the God of the billions of galaxies could hear and answer the prayers of a small child kneeling beside his bed in a tiny home in the most remote part of the world. We are not here because we have the answers. **We are here because we have a song. A song that was brought about by a “3 in 1 TOOL” OF GOD.**

This morning we want to address the most complex and yet one of our most treasured doctrines/TOOLS of the Christian faith - the doctrine of the Trinity. **THE DOCTRINE THAT ANSWERS THE QUESTION...WHO GOD IS TO YOU.** The doctrine that shows us...**God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How can it be that three persons can yet be one?**

Some theologians have solved this problem by taking a look at the Greek word PERSONA which originally meant "MASK." The Greek actor would play many roles in the same play. He would assume each new role by putting on a new mask. Hence the notion that the one God makes himself known in three masks: **Father, Son, Spirit—A 3 IN 1 TOOL.**

Others have considered the role each of us play each day. The same man can be at the same time a father, a son, a brother, an uncle, a pastor, etc. The same man but playing different roles. These are but two simple explanations of the complex doctrine of the Trinity.

How can the human brain comprehend divine mystery? We cannot. We do not have the answers, but we can sing the song and this day we have gathered to sing our song of praise to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Consider for a moment God's role or persona as Father. He is the source of all that lives and moves and has its being. He is the one who sustains our lives. He is our Creator and our provider. We have learned that he will meet our needs. He never forgets us nor forsakes us.

A devout Christian was dying at the age of 87. When his pastor came to visit, the old man said, "Pastor, I am dying. For years I have been feasting upon the promises of God, but this morning I can't remember a single one of them." The pastor replied, "Dear friend, do you think God has forgotten?" **Of course, God has not forgotten.**

Norman Vincent Peale tells about a business executive who had three boxes on his desk labeled INCOMING, OUTGOING, and UNDECIDED. The last one, "UNDECIDED" contained the most papers. Then he added a fourth box which he labeled **WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.** I need a box like that, don't you? We have learned to trust God with our needs in his role as Father. **We know with him all things are possible.**

Even when we may not feel it, his sustaining power is there. Eric Butterworth tells about a drought that hit a region in Texas sometime back. For seven years there was not a drop of rain. The soil became baked, thoroughly dry, with deep

cracks opened up in the earth. People were saying that the soil was ruined and nothing would ever grow in it again. Then the rains came. In twenty-four hours seven inches of rain soaked into the earth. The sun came out, and later still more rain fell. Finally, a strange thing happened: Texas blue bonnets began to come up, and the earth was soon covered with blossoms. Where did they come from? Nobody planted them. The seed had been in the earth all the time, through the long dry years of drought, waiting for the moisture to quicken them to life. Through all the seven years it could have been said that there were flowers there even when there were no blossoms visible to the sight of the eye.

So it is with God's power in our lives. He is our creator and sustainer. He is our loving Father.

But he is also our older brother. That is the second part of this complex mystery. "God was in Christ," writes St. Paul in First Corinthians, "RECONCILING the world unto himself...."

You may have heard on the news sometime back about the Fauna and Flora Club's efforts in England. They were conducting a "Help a Toad Across the Road" campaign. That is what the bumper sticker said, "Help a Toad Across the Road." Thousands of toads are squashed trying to cross British highways each year so this club was trying to raise people's consciousness to help more toads live to a ripe old age. They have a difficult assignment. It would help, of course, if somehow someone could communicate directly with the toads to explain how traffic lights work, etc. Of course the ideal thing would be if someone could actually become a toad. Then they could really be helped. **Pardon the crude analogy, but that is exactly what the incarnation is all about-- God took on human flesh that he might communicate His love to us toads.**

When the over 70, YEAR OLD, Ronald Reagan was campaigning for the presidency, an 80-year old woman said to him, "Everything you said sounds fine, but what about us old folks? Haven't you forgotten us?" Mr. Reagan smiled and said, "Forgotten you? Heavens, how could I ever forget you? I am one of you." **That makes a difference. To affirm that God was in Christ is to affirm that God has become one of us. He has walked where we walked.**

Just as importantly he has shown us life from God's perspective.

In his book, A Man Called Peter, Peter Marshall said that in 1913 a Jewish mathematics professor wrote a formula on the blackboard for the amusement of his students. Albert Einstein wrote $E=MC^2$. Energy equals mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light. In reference to that formula, TIME magazine said thirty-two years later that man could forget all that he had learned up to then. This was the formula that opened the secrets of atomic power. **The teachings of Jesus were just as dramatic in the spiritual realm as Einstein's were in the scientific.**

Historian Kenneth Scott Latourette reminds us, "As the centuries pass, the evidence is accumulating that, measured by his effect on history, Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet." "And," he said, "that influence appears to be mounting." No wonder we date our calendars either before Christ or after. **Even though we may not know all we would like to know about the historical Jesus, what we do know has affected our lives forever.**

Fortunately, throughout the years, Christians have discovered much more about the Christ. **That is why we can sing, "Jesus Is All the World to Me," "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," "Lord Jesus, I Love Thee," and many great Christian tunes. We may not have all the answers but we do have the song.**

This brings us to that third person in the Trinity, which we call the Holy Spirit, God present with us for guidance, for comfort and for strength. Christians find that it is not enough to say that he is our CREATOR, SUSTAINER. It is not even enough to say that God was in Christ. **God is alive and at work in our world through the power of his Holy Spirit.** He is with each of us today.

I chuckled at a story about a priest who was trying to institute some liturgical reform in his very old-fashioned parish. He was teaching them the new responses. He said to them, "When I say, 'The Lord be with you, you will reply all together, 'And with you also.'" "Then I will say, 'Let us pray.'" The day came for the introduction of the new liturgy. Something happened to the microphone, and the priest was trying to adjust it. He said in a loud voice, "There is something wrong with this microphone!" And the congregation responded with one loud voice, "And with you also!" Well, both statements are probably true. There is something wrong with all of us-- but thank God, the Lord is with us. **It is he that empowers us.**

A.J. Gordon was visiting with an English friend traveling to Niagara Falls. The Englishman remarked how sad to see such great power going to waste as the millions of gallons of water rushed over the falls in its deafening roar. He said, "This is the greatest waste of power in the world." Gordon answered, "**No, my friend, the greatest unused and wasted power in the world is the Holy Spirit in the lives of the people of God!**"

Gordon was right. It is the Spirit that empowers us—CHANGES US. But it is also the Spirit that gives us help and comfort in our hour of need. **AND IT IS GOD'S SPIRIT THAT WE SOMETIMES LET GO TO WASTE IN OUR LIVES, OUR HOUR OF NEED.... Why? Why do we waste something so precious in our lives?**

A young businessman was rushed to a hospital in serious condition. A doctor predicted that he might die. Not a religious man at the time, he did, however, turn on a radio and heard a Christian song being played: "God Will Take Care of You." He said that he couldn't get that song out of his mind. He began to pray, and as he did, he reported a sense of energy flowing in. It was near Christmas, a Sunday morning. He heard a group of nurses having a brief worship service in a nearby room and struggled up out of bed and joined them. While there, he committed his life to Jesus Christ. That man recovered. Thereafter, for the rest of his life, he remained faithful to his commitment. He referred every business and every personal decision to God, was resolute in his ethics, living by the teachings of Jesus. You've heard of this man, who told all of this in a book about his life. His name was J. C. Penney. **He found through the Spirit of God, the Power to change his life in a TIME OF NEED and well into his FUTURE.**

it is good news when someone is willing to be with us wherever we are and with whatever life may bring. Even when we are not aware of it, GOD'S SPIRIT is there. ALWAYS THERE, RIGHT BESIDE US...READY TO HELP US. JUST REACH OUT AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WILL HOLD YOUR HAND, LIFT YOU UP, HELP YOU WITH YOUR CHALLENGES.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit. One final analogy. In front of an electric power company there flashed a neon sign that said, "Light, heat, power. Light, heat, power." The same electricity but manifested in three different forms, **light, heat, power.**

How can (3) be made one? We don't have the answers but we do have the song: **"Holy, Holy, Holy...God in three persons, blessed Trinity." ALLOW GOD'S "3 IN ONE TOOL" TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOR THE BETTER WHEN EVER YOU NEED HIM TO!!** Amen.