

B Narrative 40, 2020
June 7, 2020
Poulsbo
Pastor Alison Shane

Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

Beloved of God, Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today is Holy Trinity Sunday. The Trinity is difficult theology. Our concept of the Trinity is not taken straight from scripture; like much of Christian doctrine, it is extrapolated *from* scripture. So there’s much historical scholarly conversation about the Trinity.

What Trinitarian scholars agree on, is that God’s being involves what I call “God math”: $1+1+1=1$. One God is experienced in three persons. These persons can’t be described by what they do to us: creator, redeemer, sanctifier. (That’s called *modalism*, by the way), because all do all things. Take creation for example. To call the “Father” the “Creator” overlooks Scripture’s witness in Genesis 1 that God’s Spirit (or wind or breath) moved over the waters to create, and Scripture’s witness in John 1 that “all things came into being through [Jesus] and without him not one thing came into being.”

So many ways to consider the Trinity become problematic, but what it comes down to is that the three persons of the Trinity are defined by their relationships, with one another and with us, and must therefore be described in relational terms. The hymn we sang at the beginning of worship aptly describes this relationship as a dance.

Come, Join the Dance of Trinity

1. Come, join the dance of Trinity, before all worlds begun-- the interweaving of the Three, the Father, Spirit, Son. The universe of space and time did not arise by chance, but as the Three, in love and hope, made room within their dance.

Imagine the three-person dance, as God breathes God’s Spirit over the waters and creates life, as the Son engages the creation in a bridal dance. And in creation we find that God has not created a plaything, a toy. God weaved in another dance partner! God engages us in the dance of life with the Trinity.

The hymnwriter then describes the second person of the Trinity:

2. Come, see the face of Trinity, newborn in Bethlehem; then bloodied by a crown of thorns outside Jerusalem. The dance of Trinity is meant for human flesh and bone; when fear confines the dance in death, God rolls away the stone.

The Son became human, God-with-us, with a baby’s face, a man’s character, and a human’s unstoppable dance toward death. But this is God we’re talking about. So when human fear moves to kill God, God rolls away the stone. God takes the relational move of empathy and experiences *exactly* what we do. And because that relationship is reciprocal in baptism, we know that because he experienced resurrection, we will, too.

And then God's move at Pentecost was to make sure that we not only dance alongside God, but that we embody God in this dance.

3. Come, speak aloud of Trinity, as wind and tongues of flame set people free at Pentecost to tell the Savior's name. We know the yoke of sin and death, our necks have worn it smooth; go tell the world of weight and woe that we are free to move!

"We know the yoke of sin and death, our necks have worn it smooth." We are burdened by sin, and that is so vividly evident now as the consequences of racism, of privilege – our sin – are visited upon the marginalized among us. But God is not content to let us sit on the edges of the dance floor to see how this all plays out. God moves, dances like wind, dances like fire around and in us, and frees us to move! To act! To love!

This dance of the freedom of the Trinity is danced throughout scripture, old and new.

This dance of the freedom of the Trinity is danced with us, as we live out our baptismal calling: To live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper.

This dance of the freedom of the Trinity is danced with us, as we live out our baptismal calling: To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.

This dance of the freedom of the Trinity is danced with us as we live out our baptismal calling: To serve all people, following the example of Jesus.

This dance of the freedom of the Trinity is danced with us as we live out our baptismal calling: To strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

You are called to dance for the sake of your neighbor. Dancing is exhausting. It is also exhilarating. Dancing is complicated. It is also beautiful.

God calls you to the dance.

God has danced you into being, dances you into advocacy for your neighbor, and dances you into eternity.

Thanks be to God, the three-in-one.