

Depending on where you live in the metro area you're probably getting all sorts of solicitations from roofing companies. Last week one day alone we received six postcards and two door knocks. It seems everyone wants up on our roof to check it out. There's warning from the news people about letting just anyone look and do the work. It's safer to go local yet so many of those knocking on doors are from out of state. Better to go with someone not asking for money up front or pressuring you to sign a big contract. These smooth talkers come to the door with credentials. But what can you really know about them? Are they good, what's the fine print, where can I get more information?

We might be thinking similar things about God this morning. Do we really know him? Where can we learn more? We know some things about him and we're learning more. We've examine the Scriptures, read theological books, meditated and prayed. We do understand him, but our understanding is limited. Like some roofer knocking on your door, God may have credentials but he still remains somewhat mysterious.

Today is a whole Sunday just focusing on God. It's something we do every week, but this week is special because we focus on the part of God we understand the least. We focus on what I won't be able to fully explain and what you'll never fully understand. We'll grow in love for God, but also in our appreciation and awe for him. From Jesus' words in the gospel we look at our three in one God...

**Salvation from the true God
One God revealing the truth
Three persons carrying out their roles**

"But why can't we go to the ballgame today?" a little boy asks his dad. "We have no money, I've lost my job, we need food, the hospital bills are too high, among other reasons" dad thinks to himself. Dumping the truth on the boy wouldn't help though. He's too young to understand, to appreciate, to factor everything into the decision. "We just can't." The disciples could handle more than a little boy so Jesus shared the truth with them. They learned the world would hate them and they'd be persecuted. They learned Jesus was leaving. Previously Jesus shared his upcoming suffering, death, and resurrection. Yet he said, **"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear."** The truth was becoming unbearable so Jesus stopped.

Last week on Pentecost Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to fill in the gaps, connect the dots, and help the disciples understand. He was working to make the truth more bearable. The Holy Spirit is characterized by truth. He always speaks truth, always shares truth, and he is called **"the Spirit of truth."** He shares the truth which comes from God the Son. **"I am the way, the truth, and the life,"** Jesus says. The truth also comes from God the Father because the Father sends the Holy Spirit. As Paul says in the second lesson, **"God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."** Three connected by the truth. Three connected yet one God with one purpose, the truth. Not the truth to every question you want to ask. It's the single truth coming from God, knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Humans think we're pretty advanced. Television shows share details about this planet's beginning, about the science of the human body, about technology, and so much more that it would seem we've got everything figured out. Maybe you're part of the group who knows we don't have everything figured out; who knows the truth is still elusive. But some of our questions aren't always worldly. They're directed at God, demanding to know the truth from him. God, how do you expect me to follow you when I can't see you? You seem all powerful and all knowing yet why did you allow the oil spill to harm so many? Why do you ask me to do things you know I don't want to? How can you be one God and still three persons? The truth about the Trinity is unbearable. It makes my head hurt because my reason can't piece it together. My sinful heart naturally wants to deny.

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit among us so we know the truth. Look in the Scriptures because the one God is there. He's one God speaking with plural pronouns. **"Then God said, Let us make man in our image"**. Events take place where God certainly is but three persons take part. Jesus' baptism has Jesus in the water, God the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending looking like a dove. Piece that together, try and comprehend that. We'll never understand intellectually. Enter the Holy Spirit to help us believe and confess it. The Holy Spirit working through the Scriptures convinces us through faith we're united with one God.

Being united with the one true God we're strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Confessing the one true God is easy then. In a safe environment where we sure to not be asked too many questions we can't answer and where we won't get into a conflict because of what we believe we're okay. But understanding is tested and pushed because safe and easy isn't what our one God had in mind. People try and say everybody worships the same God just calls him different names. Tell them the truth. There's only one God and he's the only one who saves. When they try and say there's no such thing as truth make your confession. There is truth. **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth."** Our one God saves and he reveals the truth.

Next time we confess the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed take a moment and notice the three main divisions of those creeds. They focus on the Trinity. First the work of creation and preservation of this world is ascribed to God the Father. Everything continues to work under his control. Everything came together just right so that at the right time Christ would be born into this world. The work of redemption is ascribed to Jesus the Son of God. Our redeemer went to the cross to pay for our sins. He lived a perfect life in our place and sacrificed himself only to take up his life again in the resurrection. Now he lives and reigns from on high. And the work of keeping people in faith and bringing about good works is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. He's the one who reveals everything we need through the Word and sacrament.

So it would seem that the persons of the Trinity have certain roles. But the division of work in the Trinity is something human beings use to make it clearer. It's also because people have fallen into all sorts of trouble when talking about the Trinity. It's easy to do. But we go too far if we say that God is like one actor playing three different parts. Sometimes he turns to us as the Father, then as the Son, and finally as the Holy Spirit other times. We go too far when we say that Jesus is the only important one and the rest don't really matter. We don't go far enough if we abandon trying to learn anything about the Trinity just because it is hard to understand.

Care is to be taken when describing the three persons in one God. Each person participates in the ultimate work of saving human beings. They may have specialized roles but as fully God each gets full credit. Salvation comes from the only true God who is three in one. **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"** the apostle Paul admits. We confess this Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "The LORD bless you and keep you." We are blessed by him. **"The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you."** We have the face of the loving God shining on us. **"The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace."** And we have peace as the three persons of God carry out their roles. Our three in one God saves us.

I'll admit you probably don't know much more now about the Trinity than when I started. Each of us makes slow but limited progress in our understanding of God. That's okay. We don't want a God we can fit in a box. We don't want a God that makes sense to us. If he did, he wouldn't be God. If we could understand him he wouldn't be powerful enough to keep tornados from destroying houses or gentle enough to extend a hand of mercy when they do. We need the God we have. The three in one God, the true God, who brings us salvation.