

## Holy Trinity / Sharing the faith

Have you even felt like Ed? Have you felt like your faith was private? Felt like even if you wanted to tell someone what being a Christian means you couldn't do it?

First of all let's clear up this American myth. Being a Christian is not a private matter. Christianity is never just about me and God. It's never about just you and God. We are not God's only child. Be very weary of a Christianity that is really heavy into this "my God" stuff. Maybe that's why when Jesus' disciples asked Jesus how to pray Jesus said pray this way.

Our Father. Our Father who art in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our .  
Lead us not, But deliver us.

However even though Christianity is never just about me and God, you and God, Jesus does call us into a relationship that is personal, very personal.

Yet though it is personal it is never private. Quite often when we are trying to be private we are up to no good. Private relationships are dangerous.

Our Vision statement is not very private it says: *We are a welcoming church, focused on Christ, together reaching out to the community.*

Our Mission statement is even more public Our Mission or our purpose is *Proclaiming God's love and salvation for everyone through Jesus Christ.*

But you might say that if we aren't going to keep our faith private what will we say? Lutherans are unfortunately notoriously insecure when it comes to sharing the faith. We Lutherans are blessed with a great theological tradition. We are blessed with a wonderful understanding of God's grace. One of the reasons we don't share our faith is because we think we need to explain it all. Perhaps we make things too complicated. Maybe there is a way to keep it simple.

First of all if we are going to go public with our faith, we need to remember what we can do and what we can't do. Don't worry about converting anybody to Christianity. If you possibly could get someone to choose Jesus. If you have the gift of persuasion or if you could explain it all perfectly and they choose Jesus it won't be the real Jesus. So don't even go there. That is not your job. That is the job of the Holy Spirit. That's what Jesus was trying to tell "Nick at Nite", Nicodemus, you need to be born of the spirit. The Holy Spirit's job is to teach the heart to love Jesus. That's not your job.

So what can you do? Let's remember what day it is. Who can tell me what day this is in the church year? It is Holy Trinity Sunday. It is the day in the Church year that we celebrate three ways that God has and continues to reveal God's self to us. What ways are they? Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

If only the church through out history had developed a way to express the faith. If only the church had developed a statement, a creed that helped us express how God has been revealed to us.

Wait a minute how about the The Apostle's creed? The Apostles' creed was written as a statement of faith against those who said that Jesus was just a spirit on the one side and those who said the OT wasn't important anymore that you just needed the NT.

I remember in my senior year at seminary as I was going through the candidacy process to become a pastor we had to write a paper expressing my faith. I took the Apostle's creed as the basis of my paper and expanded it. But we could do just the opposite. We could take the Apostles' creed, simplify it and use it as a basis to express our faith.

Let's look at the apostles' creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty creator of heaven and earth.

Luther looked at this and said this means that:

God has created me and all that exists. He has given me and still preserves my body and soul

with all their powers.

He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil.

All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him.

**What if we simplified it and just said.** *I believe in the God that created everything and somehow keeps everything going in this world.*

**Let's say that together.**

**Then the next part: I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;**

**On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**Luther looked at this and said: I believe that Jesus Christ-true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary-is my Lord.**

At great cost he has saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, He has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil- not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death.

All this he has done that I may be his own, live under him in his kingdom. and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

**What if we simplified it and just said:** *This God, came to earth as a human being just like you and me even though he's God. He died in our place so that we can go to heaven.*

**What if we put those together:**

*I believe in the God that created everything and somehow keeps everything going in this world.*

*This God, came to earth as a human being just like you and me even though he's God. He died in our place so that we can go to heaven.*

**Let's say that together.**

**Then the last part:**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. amen**

**Luther looked at this and said, this means that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my lord, or come to him.**

But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith.

In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church day after day he fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day he will raise me and all the dead and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. **This is most certainly true.**

**What if we simplified that to:** *The spirit of this God comes to give me faith and keep me in faith. But not just me but the whole Christian church.*

**So to put it all together:**

*I believe in a God that created everything and somehow keeps everything going in this world.*

*This God, came to earth as a human being just like you and me even though he's God. He died in our place so that we can go to heaven.*

*The spirit of this God comes to give me faith and keep me in faith. But not just me but the whole Christian church.*

**Let's say it together:**

**Obviously, this doesn't say it all but you don't have to say it all, not all at once. Sometimes you don't have to say anything. Sometimes you just have to be there for them and do what you can for them.**

**However look for the time. It will come. Maybe the time will come when a loved one is lost or a relationship is broken. Or maybe someone will ask you to go to Valley Fair on Sunday and you turn them down. And they ask you why. Well I go to church on Sunday. Why? Because I'm a Christian. What's a Christian? What do Christians believe? Well, I believe in the God that created everything.**

## Pentecost 3 JUNE 25 Proper 7

We have two disturbing stories this morning. In the first lesson we have a good man, a God fearing man who didn't do anything wrong. His name is Job. One day Job's whole life falls apart. He loses every one in his family



except his wife. Loses all of his possessions, which were many, he was very rich. He loses his health. He is miserable. His wife the great supporter that she is says to him: "Curse God and die." Ok she is not the greatest supporter.

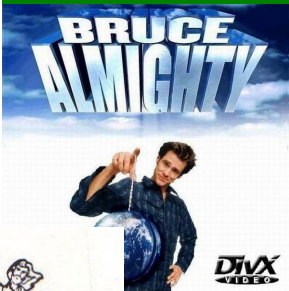
Three of Job's friends come to visit him. They don't seem to want to comfort him. They are more interested in justifying their understanding of God. They keep trying to rationalize Job's plight saying that he must have done something to deserve this. As everyone knows they say, if you do what is right in the eyes of God, God will bless you not curse you. God wouldn't let a good man suffer like this.

Job claims and rightfully so that he is the original poster boy for when bad things happen to good people. And he is right he did nothing to deserve his sufferings he

was as we are told by the author a good man, a good God fearing man. Yet he suffered.

Even though he was a good man, God did not particularly appreciate Job calling him into account. As God says I will question you and you will answer me.

In the movie "Bruce Almighty" things are not going well for Bruce, played by Jim Carey. He says that God is a mean kid with a magnifying glass. Since Bruce doesn't get the job he wants and gets into a car accident Bruce



declares that God is the only one who is not doing his job. Bruce seems to think that God's job is to make sure everything goes well with Bruce.

In our gospel we hear how the disciples, are scared out of their wits. They are going across the sea of Galilee. O, here is a question for you.

Why did the disciples cross the lake?

A: To get to the other side.

B: Because Jesus told them to.

They went to the other side – on the other side is the gentiles, the unbelievers.

Jesus told them to go. So essentially they are caught in because of anything they did. But because they were Jesus told them to do.



this storm not doing what

can conclude don't do bad things that you things at least

There are a number of things we so far. One is that just because you anything wrong, it doesn't mean won't happen to you. I would bet would be worse off if you did bad in the long run but being good won't assure smooth sailing in life.

Another thing we can conclude is that following Jesus' direction will not necessarily keep you out of trouble. I do still believe that in the long run you are better off following Jesus. But Jesus might lead you right into trouble.



So if following Jesus won't always get us everything we want. If following Jesus won't even always get us everything we need. If following Jesus might even get us into trouble, why follow

him? I think that is an excellent question.

I remember when Sandy and I were making our wedding plans. We had a visit with the photographer. We had a list of pictures we wanted to make sure the photographer took. When we started telling her what we wanted she said, Honey I know what you want, I even know what you don't know that you want. She was so condescending. I can't forget thinking, Lady what I don't want is you!!!!

Of course she was right. She could have worked on her people skills, but she did know all about wedding



pictures. She had done it for years. She had worked many weddings. She knew what she was doing. I should have trusted her.

Jesus says to us today. I know importantly I know what you what you don't know that you There might be rough waters even be storms ahead. It might



what you want. More need. I even know need.

ahead. There might seem that I am have to trust me.

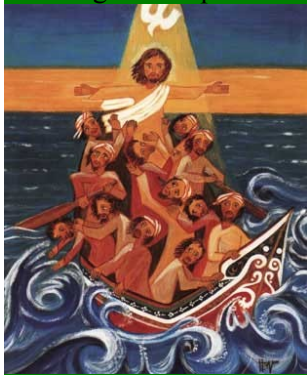
be asleep? Didn't he

sending you right into those storms. You are just going to The boat was sinking disciples were scared, how could Jesus care?

time was right. He

He cared he was in the boat with them. He knew when the knew and had the ability to act when the time was right.

We all have times of rough waters in our lives, times of terrible storms. Like Job we can lose our family members, we can lose our jobs our money our possessions. We can lose the support of our family and friends. And there is no way of making light of it. These trying times, times of pain and suffering of emotional strain. You might be experiencing rough or stormy waters in your life.



The challenge of faith in Jesus Christ is not to have faith that Jesus will pull us through in the way we want or in a way that we can imagine. Of course that is our prayer and it can happen. Make no mistake about it. And we should be honest in our prayers of our hopes and desires. However, the challenge our challenge is not just to trust that Jesus will comply with our hopes and prayers. Our challenge in faith is to trust Jesus no matter what happens. Jesus says to you today, You're just going to have to trust me.

**Paul in his letter to the Romans reminds us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.** (Romans 8:35-39) Who will separate us from the

love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Are the waters of your life rough, stormy? Jesus says to you: You are just going to have to trust me. I'm in the boat with you and I am worthy of your trust.

And all God's people said. Amen.

