

"Here Am I Lord, Send Me"

Texts: Isaiah 6:1-8

Romans 8:12-17 (Series B. Trinity Sunday) Ps. 29

John 3:1-17

Let us pray:

O God, light of the minds that know you, life of the souls that love you, and strength of the thoughts that seek you - bless the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts. Breath your life into us that we may live in the manner you have appointed unto us and better love and serve you and one another. Amen.

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of being born from above - or being born anew - he was not talking of a natural birth. As he explained to Nicodemus, he was talking of *a spiritual birth* - a birth that was, and is, somehow, supernatural.

"Very truly, I tell you", Jesus said, "no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

I want us to reflect on this - I want us to think about our unnatural birth - and about the mystery that is involved in it – the mystery of God - the God who made us and gave us our first birth - the God who saves us, by becoming one with us, dying with us and for us - the God who lives and works in us and gives us our second, our unnatural birth.

Our experience of God is a marvellous and mysterious experience.

We have and we know the God of Isaiah -
the God who speaks and brings forth all of creation,
the God who is Judge, Lord, Ruler, King,
the God who is in light inaccessible hidden from our eyes.

❖ **This God is strange to us:**

this God is beyond us, this God we dare not touch even though we know this God and he knows us, even though we see this God's signs all around us in the earth, the wind, the air, and the fire.

❖ **And then we have the God who is in Christ.**

the God who is Christ - the God whom is lowly, and humble
the God who reaches out and touches others, the God who serves others,
the God who walks the earth with us, and cries and laughs with us;
the God who hungers and thirsts with us,
the God who embraces us and encourages us,
the God who surrenders himself to death for us having only the promise and the hope of being raised again.

❖ **And we have and know God the Spirit -**

God the bringer of visions and of dreams,
God the source of strength and of hope,
God the supplier of healing words and of comfort filling prayer
God the wind, the breath, the air we breath God the transformer, the one who gives new birth, new life.

Trinity Sunday..... Celebration of One God but Three Persons. It's so very difficult –impossible – for us as mere mortals to wrap our brains around the mystical mysterious concept of the Trinity, or mathematically speaking: **1 + 2 = One**.

While our human minds cannot possibly grasp the Trinity in its complexities, we still wrestle with how to reduce it to fit in a small box in our minds that we can pretend to understand. The mind naturally seeks to sort and file its collected data into usable bits amidst the anxiety of those pieces that simply don't fit the space allotted.

The Christian Trinity is, plainly and purely, if not simply, a mystery. Yet if it is explained then there is no mystery and is easily dismissed. What is God-like in that? Some minds clamor for any mystery to be reduced and answerable to fit neatly into our human reasoning.

The mystery of the Trinity is nothing if not confusing. One God / Three Persons – separate yet one, equal with different roles that are ultimately the same, belief in one is meant to be belief in all and the One that is the same but different.

The God whose presence is within us and the present all around us, God calling to us - calling for us - calling through us, calling in us... As a Christian I do **not know** all about God that there is to know - God is always greater than my knowledge of him - but I do know what God has shown me about himself – through his character as revealed in Scriptures. If we can truly understand the mysteries of God, then that God, for me, is way too small.

I think, what most people lack in their lives is a sense of the mystery of God and of the mystery of the life that God gives to them. For some reason we keep trying to develop one simple mental picture of God one simple portrait of what we want God to be like or ought to be like.

Most of us like to box God - and we will go to incredible lengths to fit God into this box or that box - but God is greater than any box - any system of thought or classification, and so is our life in him.

Sister Sandra M. Schneiders, I.H.M., wrote “That if your understanding of the Trinity is two men and a bird, it is time to rethink! If we can truly understand the mysteries of God, then that “god,” for me, is way too small. Only through our imperfect faith can we even begin to attempt belief in and answer the call of heavenly things.

The point I am making is either **humans** are sovereign or **God** is sovereign... that is our choice. Our ultimate authority is either the **reason** and **thinking** of human beings or it is God, the creator and source of all knowledge. God is just and holy - demanding perfect obedience - yet God is merciful, loving, and forgiving - willing to forgive unto the seventh generation.

I am a sinner - unworthy to touch the hem of the gown worn by Christ yet I am a child of God - intimately acquainted with his Spirit, a joint heir with his Son of all the riches of heaven. Our God is a mystery and the life that our God gives to us is a mystery, but because God, within that mystery, touches us, it is mystery that we can experience.

When I became a Christian, when I yielded myself to the claims of Jesus his claim to be the Son of God, his claim to be the way, the truth and the life, his claim to be in the Father, and the Father in him, something drastic happened to my life. My vision began to change, my understanding began to change. I began to see new things in the world around me:

- ❖ I began to see the hand of God in my life and the lives of people around me,
- ❖ I began to sense that God was reaching out to people and calling them to himself.
- ❖ I began to sense that God was in people, struggling to convince them of the beauty that is in them,
- ❖ I began to see the world as a mystical place, full of enchantment full of purpose and of meaning,
- ❖ I began to feel compulsions to do things that I had never done before, the compulsion to pray for others, to feel their pain.
- ❖ the compulsion to tell others that God is good, and is all around them,
- ❖ the compulsion to suddenly stop in the midst of turmoil, pain, suffering and thank God for little, little things in life, or simply to take a breath to the fact that in suffering there is some divine purpose too deep for words.
- ❖ And I began to experience within myself a growing peace, a peace that continues to grow, and
- ❖ I began to experience in others - in their struggles and in their joys, in their sufferings and in their triumphs, the working of the God that is in my life.

My life is not natural - and I thank God for it. What I experience now is not something that came to me as the result of my first birth- nor did I learn it somehow in books or that theological seminary.

Nor did I earn it by living a better life than most other people around me, it happened - as a result of coming to **believe** in God, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and asking him to be my God, my personal God - in the way Jesus taught.

All true believers have this experience, all who hunger and thirst for righteousness, all who yearn for God, are satisfied. All true believers experience grace and sense the giftedness of their lives. All true believers know the incredible miracle of the indwelling Spirit of God.

True Christians know that they are born from above - and as in their first birth - the birth by water - they know it is totally miraculous, and the labour of God, and not by their own works.

And true believers - as a result of their experience, have come to see the word of God as true in every respect, they have come to see that God has revealed himself to them. My friends, this is truth that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus.

Nicodemus had a hard time grabbing hold of that truth, he couldn't quite understand how one could be born anew it didn't seem natural to him -- and it isn't natural - rather it is divine, it is the gift of the God - the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. So, we preach, and so we believed - says the Apostle Paul.

May it be so, both now and forevermore.

-- Amen--

May 26, 2024