

The Holy Trinity
May 30, 2010

Isaiah 45:15-21
195-278-277-334

I Believe in the "Hidden" God

I. So I bow my heart in humble faith.

II. So I rejoice in the revelation in His Word.

Dear Christian friends,

I hope you took the time to read the **Athanasian Creed** as suggested in the bulletin. That creed is the church's confession of the **doctrine** of the Holy Trinity. That creed also makes **absolutely** NO SENSE. It's easy to finish reading the Athanasian Creed – scratch your head and ask, "HUH? I didn't understand a word of it."

That **right there** is a good confession! That brings home the point of this **special day**. We just CAN'T comprehend or explain God. God is, as Isaiah here says, "**a God who hides Himself.**" So on this **Trinity Sunday** we confess, "I BELIEVE IN THE 'HIDDEN' GOD." That confession impresses two truths on us. "I BELIEVE in the 'hidden' God 1)so I bow my heart in humble faith and 2)I rejoice in the revelation in His Word.

I. So I bow my heart in humble faith.

"Truly You are a God who hides Himself." Do you want proof that we believe in the HIDDEN God? Then just consider the MYSTERY of God's being. The God is triune. Now you won't find the words **triune** or **trinity** in the Bible. The church has made up those words. While the word trinity is **not in** the Bible the Bible does clearly teach the DOCTRINE of the Holy Trinity.

Today reminds us to MAKE SURE we are clear on this truth. We confess in the Athanasian Creed that we "WORSHIP ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS AND THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD." There is only one real God. "**I am the LORD, and there is no other,**" God says here. Today we echo the confession of God's OT people, "**Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD, is one.**" Paul plainly put it, "**There is no God but one.**" There is ONLY ONE divine, eternal Being. The Athanasian Creed is very clear and emphatic on that point. "ONE ETERNAL – ONE UNCREATED – ONE INFINITE – ONE ALMIGHTY – ONE LORD – ONE GOD."

That we can understand. The PROBLEM is that the **one** God clearly reveals Himself to be THREE **separate** and **distinct** Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Think of Jesus' command to baptize "**in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**" Or recall Jesus' own baptism. God the Father speaking from heaven. God the Son, our Lord Jesus, **on the banks** of the Jordan River. God the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. Each Person is SEPARATE from the others. The Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. **Each one is fully God** – but there is ONLY ONE God. "ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS AND THREE PERSONS IN ONE GOD."

Attempts have been made to **at least** ILLUSTRATE this mystery. **For example**, the equilateral triangle with its **three equal** sides. The one triangle is the ONE God. Each side of the triangle is ONE PERSON of the Holy Trinity. But that **illustration** really doesn't hold true. You can't take just one side of a triangle and say, "THIS IS a triangle." It's **not**. Yet we can say – we must say! – about our Savior, "HE IS GOD." "**In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,**" the Bible declares. We can and must say about the Holy Spirit, "HE IS GOD." The same goes for the Father. Each one – each **Person** – is true God from all eternity – "YET THEY ARE NOT THREE GODS, BUT ONE GOD."

"I believe in the 'hidden' God." So I bow my heart in **humble awe** before the mystery of the Holy Trinity. To do anything else is IDOLATRY. It is sinful pride and **arrogance** to try to limit the LIMITLESS God to my **limited, feeble understanding**. It is plain stupidity to ACCEPT ONLY what I can figure out and to REJECT whatever I **can't explain**. We don't even do that in our daily lives! I **don't know** how my car all works but I'm **certainly not** going to give up driving. I don't understand my computer but I'm not going to throw it out the window. God's being – WHO God is – is WAY BEYOND our **understanding**. He is triune and we simply accept and **believe** that.

"I believe in the 'hidden' God." That confession certainly applies to God's ROLE in my **daily life**. **My God** – the triune God – is almighty – "**Nothing is impossible**" for Him. He knows everything. He is everywhere. He loves me. He is always working all things for my good. But when I try to "WALK BY SIGHT" and **not by faith** I'm tempted to doubt God's **love, power, wisdom**. I'm tempted to cry out, "WHERE are You, God? WHAT are You doing?" And it's quiet. "**Truly You are a God who hides Himself.**" I can't explain or **begin to understand** all God's ways and plans for me – for you – for our congregation – our synod – our country. That truth can really come home on HOSPITAL CALLS or **nursing home** visits. Then comes that **big WHY** question. "WHY is God doing this? **Why** doesn't God do something about whatever?" I can't answer those questions. ONLY GOD can. And He simply says, "TRUST Me. I love you. I KNOW WHAT I'm doing **even if you don't.**" So I bow my heart in **humble faith** and say with Paul, "**Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?**"

"I believe in the 'hidden' God." That could be very depressing. We don't understand God. We **can't** FIGURE OUT God's ways. **Sometimes** we can feel like PUPPPETS on a string pulled here and there according to **God's whims**. "**I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness. I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.**" Our HIDDEN GOD has spoken! He has given us His **Word!** Yes, God hasn't told us everything there is to know. But God has told us all that we NEED TO KNOW. So as believers in the 'hidden' God...

II. We rejoice in the revelation in His Word.

The "hidden" God reveals that He is my Creator. "**He who created the heavens, He is God; He who fashioned and made the earth, He founded it; He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited.**" "**By faith**" I KNOW that God made this world out of nothing in just six normal days by His almighty power. To believe in evolution is to **call God** a LIAR when He says He created this world. This precious fact of **God creating** our world is so full of COMFORT and CONFIDENCE for us.

Our God is eternal – He **always is**. God is not "HERE TODAY and gone tomorrow" **like** some fickle friend. God is smart beyond degree. As I consider the beauty of God's creation – the wonders of the **human brain** and body – I see how wise God really is. I can be confident my God KNOWS WHAT He's doing. Sure, I don't understand everything God does but that's **not surprising** - God is SMARTER than me! And God is powerful! "**Let there be,**" our Creator said, "**and there it was.**" As I talk to my "hidden" God in prayer I know that none of my problems are TOO BIG for handle. And what's really neat – **none** of my problems are TOO SMALL for Him to be concerned about!

But there is ONE THING that bothers me. This world. It's not the perfect world God had created. It's a MESS! God has told us why in His Word. **Sin**. And it's not just the sin of other people – it's my sin as well. I have made a mess of my life. **Instead of following** God's ways I like to wander off ON

MY OWN. I don't listen to my Creator all the time. I ignore Him – I even defy Him and tell Him, “It’s MY LIFE and I’ll do what I want.” Yes, that’s stupid – but that’s WHAT WE DO when we sin. And instead of being happy and satisfied we end up feeling ALONE – AFRAID – GUILTY. When I try to push God off to the side in my life, I have this **big** EMPTY SPACE in my heart and life. And I’ve done it over and over! I sometimes wonder if God is **getting** SICK AND TIRED of me. **Sometimes** I wonder if I should hide from Him!

“Truly You are a God who hides Himself, O God and Savior of Israel!” God has certainly not hidden His love for me – for you – for all people. It’s tempting to say that God CAME OUT OF HIDING to save us. The **eternal Son** of God actually came to this earth and was born one of us. Jesus came and lived an absolutely sinless life for us – the holy life WE OWED God but never could live. Then Jesus took all our sins on Himself and died on the cross to pay for every one of them. The **Son of God** **“shed His blood to cleanse us from all sin.”** But Jesus didn't stay dead! Jesus rose from the dead – He came out of His grave alive again. Jesus conquered death and the grave and He shares that victory with us. **Trusting** in Jesus we have eternal life – we are going straight to heaven when we die.

The hidden God – the triune God – is our SAVIOR God. The Father **“so loves”** us that **“He gave His only begotten Son”** to be our Savior. The Son **“so loves”** us that He lived and died to save us. The Holy Spirit **“so loves”** us that He worked faith in our hearts and keeps us in that saving faith. God loves me SO MUCH that when I come to Him every day and ask Him to forgive me – He DOES JUST THAT! **For Jesus' sake** God fully and freely forgives all our sins every day. God assures me that when I die I will live with Him in His heavenly glory. WHAT A REVELATION to rejoice in! Thank our **hidden** God that He reveals Himself and speaks to us in His Word. I **don't have to search** HIGH AND LOW for God. He's right here for me in His Word and Sacraments.

You may have noticed that in this sermon I often slipped into the FIRST PERSON pronoun – **I/me/my**. “I believe in the ‘**hidden**’ God. So I bow MY HEART in **humble faith**. So I rejoice in the revelation in His Word. That’s not to question your faith, but it was done intentionally. A **confession of faith** expresses a person’s RELATIONSHIP with God. And, “I BELIEVE IN THE HIDDEN GOD.” Amen.

Hymn #277