

“Spiritual Checks and Balances”

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

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Today is Trinity Sunday. Churches all over the world celebrate the Triune God, the Father God, Jesus, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. Trinity is such a profound and difficult topic. There are many challenging theological questions in understanding the Triune God. What does it mean that we have only one God in three persons? Have you ever thought what the Trinity is? I want to be clear with you about my point. The concept of Trinity was invented to explain distinct functions of God using three status of the persons such as the Creator, Savior and guide in three forms by Tertullian, a Theologian in early Christian church (around 155-204 A.D.). The main point is ***God's constant presence in love***. God cannot be God without love. We keep *this* Christian faith.

The concept of Trinity helps us find a balanced faith. I want to call it “Spiritual Checks and Balances”. We often use “checks and balances” to refer to our government. The democratic system is the Legislative: Congress, Executive: President and Judicial: the Supreme Court. One branch should never have too much power! Each keeps checking and balancing one another. This structure guarantees that not one branch has too much power. This will work for our Trinity, too. Some liberal theologians argue that we need only universal God. This will not be good enough to explain the whole and entire God. The universe God doesn't manifest God's love or God's unique God's character. Jesus is our center and we are rooted in Jesus believing him as God's virtue and characters as the incarnated God. Jesus showed us God's love in his death and resurrection. Without Jesus, God remains as a scientific energy or philosophical concept. Some radical Christians argue that they don't need the Holy Spirit but only historical Jesus as their faith role model. They try to exercise and practice Christian faith as Jesus did in His time. But we live in a different generation, culture and society in the 21st century. We follow Jesus and practice the principle of love in his teachings. Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot discern God's grace, love and future direction. The Holy Spirit gives us inspiration, guidance and direction. If you only emphasize the Holy Spirit, your faith will be more like “Mystic” faith. If you only believe in historical Jesus, Christianity becomes only a revolutionary social activism or social change movement. We also don't want to mix up Christianity with other religious traditions. We need spiritual checks and balances. The concept of Trinity reminds us that we need the integration of God's three forms (persons) in love which balances one another.

When I was a child, God was a fearful God like a judge who will make judgment on my behavior. I thought that he would make a final decision whether I would go to heaven or hell when I die. This is not what Jesus taught us about God. God is ever loving and caring and for His children. Whoever believes in Jesus, God will never leave us alone. When we cry for help, God will listen to our pain and comfort us. When we grieve, God grieves with us. When we are helpless and hopeless, God comes to us as companion and hope. God is our friend who carefully listens to us, shares our burdens and brings us comfort when we are in pain. This is what Immanuel God means. The Trinity God is a great reminder that we are God's children, Jesus is our shepherd and the Holy Spirit is our guide in His countless love and boundless care.

Today's Scripture reading assures us that God is in us. The Apostle Paul says, "Jesus Christ is in you? Brothers and sisters, live in peace; and the God of love." God is not up in the air but *God is here always with us!* The Holy Spirit will help us to receive the love of God. The Apostle Paul shares a great Christian blessing in verse 13, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Isn't this wonderful summary of the Trinity God? The father God, Jesus, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are not separated but they work together to manifest the love of God in us.

Where are you in your life? Do you still feel that the love of God stays in you or you are disconnected from the love of God? Wherever you are in your life stages, take a pause and turn your heart to God. The Holy Spirit is yearning to come in your heart and share God's caring, comforting and healing love for you, but if you do not open your heart to the Holy Spirit, there is no way to receive the gift of Trinity. You need to be tuned in with the Holy Spirit. It is like finding a radio station to hear music in a car. When I drive long distance alone, I usually turn on the radio to hear music. I have to search for channels in order to listen to the music. The Triune God is already given to us as a pre-gift. We need to be intentional to open our heart and to receive this gift.

When we turn to God through the work of the Holy Spirit in us, we will be able to be connected to God. God will give us the assurance of faith that God loves you. You will have a strong and deep trust in God. This is what the gift of Trinity promises to us today. Through, we will receive strength, serenity, hope and love through Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

May God's love and peace be in you through the Creator God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and grant you constant God's loving presence in your lives. Amen.