

## “Trinity Sunday and Father’s Day”

Psalm 8:1-8, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

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Today is Father’s Day. Father's Day is not a celebration that we keep in the church calendar, but many Methodist churches celebrate today as a special Sunday to honor our Fathers. Actually, according to the church calendar, we celebrate today as Trinity Sunday. Trinity means the Father God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. What do you think will be a common theme between Parenthood and the Trinity? (Maybe, stress?) Trinity is such a profound, difficult and theological topic. You don’t desire to hear a long lecture about the Trinity this morning. Often in the Bible, God is described as the Father and Jesus as His son. Have you ever thought about any reason? Some liberal pastors and theologians removed the Father God because of its negative patriarchal image. Instead they use an inclusive and neutral image of God like ‘Maker’ or ‘the Sprit’, but the Bible uses metaphors of parenthood to describe God. Jesus also called God as Father. This morning, let’s explore this.

The origin of Father’s Day in the United States was founded in Spokane, Washington at the YMCA in 1910 by Sonora Smart Dodd, who was born in Arkansas. Her father was a single parent who raised his six children there. After hearing a sermon about Jarvis' Mother's Day in 1909, she told her pastor that fathers should have a similar holiday honoring them. Although she initially suggested June 5, her father's birthday, the pastors did not have enough time to prepare their sermons, and the celebration was deferred to the third Sunday of June. (As you know, pastors work hard to prepare their message every Sunday!!) Today is a day to remember all our fathers. We want to say thank you. In Korea, there is one special Parents’ Day that covers both Fathers and Mothers on May 8<sup>th</sup>. One interesting difference in Korea is that they celebrate Children’s Day as a holiday, but not Parent’s Day.

When I recall my childhood memories about my father, I never heard him say, “I love you!” nor did he give me any hugs or read a book to me before I went to bed. There was no such verbal and physical expression in traditional Korean culture. So he wasn’t used to expressing his heart to his sons. But I never doubted his genuine heart for us because he was always around me. Whenever I needed, he took any risk to make himself available. What I deeply appreciated was his ‘**constant presence**’ in my life. Now, I am a father of two boys. My wife and I often talk about how our life has changed from seven years

ago when we were married. Two boys radically and truly have changed our lives. We feel more responsible for our lives and for our children as well. Regarding a good example of parenthood or parenting, I am not an expert or excellent parent, but I have personal experience now. At least, it requires patience, responsibility and presence for 24 hours / 7 days a week. (Parents do not seem to have any free time!) Truly 'the constant presence' is the most demanding work for parents. But psychologists put great emphasis on the importance of parent's presence. They advise that children are able to establish feelings of security, basic trust and attachment through the parent's presence.

Let's talk about the Trinity. Trinity means that there is only one God in three persons: the Creator Father God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, the counselor and guide. These three are distinct from one another but they are one in all and co-equal. In other words, each is God, whole and entire. You may ask this question, "We don't understand how God can have no beginning." Or "We don't understand a God who is present everywhere at the same time." Our Methodism founder, John Wesley, explains the Trinity using an image of water: three forms (ice, steam, liquid) one substance. He tried a different image for the trinity saying, "Tell me how it is that in this room there are three candles and only one light?" Does it explain the Trinity to you? We could say that the Trinity is like a 3-in-1 bottle of shampoo: It has rinse, cleaner and conditioners, three active ingredients but within one substance. Maybe, this is an easier explanation.

The Old Testament reading describes the creator God who is present in nature. The Trinity is present in God's nature. The Psalmist is overwhelmed by God's majesty and by God's care for each one of us. Our God is like our parents. John 3:16 is God's mission statement for us. "God so loved the world and He sent His Only Son to us." When we call on to God, God wouldn't leave us alone, but God will be there for us no matter what. This is our God! The Scripture theme is that people who struggle and suffer are strengthened and renewed by God's presence with them. In the Old Testament stories, the Israelite people suffered under slavery in Egypt for 400 years. Later, the kingdom of Israel was invaded and people taken into captivity. The author of Psalm praises that God is their refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. So, they don't have to be afraid.

The New Testament reading assures us that God is in us. The Apostle Paul says, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? Brothers and sisters, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love." Paul wants us to discern that our God dwells in us through Jesus. In Christ, we

have promise that *God is always with us!* The gift and power of the Holy Spirit connects us to feel the presence of the Lord. The essence of Christianity is not to give you right answers to your problems. Rather, God gives you courage and strength to face your challenges.

When I was a child, God was a very fearful God, like a judge who makes a judgment on my behavior. I believed that God would make a final decision whether I would go to heaven or hell when I die. This is not what we learn about God through Jesus. We would like to think that all our fathers are always willing to be there for us, but that is not always true. But our Father God is always willing to dwell in us as long as we accept God in our hearts. The essence of the Trinity is a loving presence of God in our hearts. May this love of God be with you, strengthen you and renew your life. Amen.