

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-7

May 30, 2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Woe is me, for I am lost!” Have you ever felt that way? I certainly have. But Isaiah’s words from today’s Old Testament lesson are even stronger than they seem. Isaiah believes God’s judgment is coming down on him now.

Instead of *lost*, other translations have “undone.” *“Woe is me, for I am undone.”* But a good Hebrew dictionary shows you the full force: it means *destroyed*. *“Woe is me, for I am destroyed”* – “I have come to my end, I am ruined, I will cease to exist.” It’s what you would say at the brink of death.

If you’ve had your heart broken, or friends turn on you; if you’ve lost your job, or felt like you were losing your mind; if you’ve heard the doctor come out of the operating room and say, “I’m sorry, we did all we could,” then you know the feeling of being lost, undone, about to be destroyed. If you’ve ever been betrayed, caught in a lie, exposed for the fraud that you are – then you have an inkling of how Isaiah feels at this moment, in the temple, when he is brought to tears and terror, ruin and the end of all things. Woe is me, everything is lost, there is no hope!

~~Even~~ We Christians are, much of the time, oblivious to our own sin. We grow comfortable with it, imagine nothing will come of it. We rationalize our greed, justify our jaded attitude, overlook our laziness in things spiritual. It takes a crisis to confront who we really are, our condition as lost, helpless, undone, destroyed. This is why a crisis is a gift, an opportunity to return to the one and only thing that matters.

What is Isaiah’s crisis? God Himself is Isaiah’s crisis. God’s appearance exposes everything that is sinful, everything that is hypocritical, everything

that is mortal in Isaiah. He sees God in the temple, **“the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.”** He sees spirits, angels unlike anything Michelangelo or Raphael would paint; having six wings and full of fire. The voice of one of these seraphim caused earth and temple to rumble and quake at the threefold cry of *Holy!*

What does it mean that God is holy? God is mysterious, powerful beyond measure, and full of awe. He is high above, separate from all earthly things. But God’s holiness also describes His character, as completely good, devoid of all evil.

As such, fallen man cannot survive the presence of the holy God. He is as fire consuming all available oxygen. Isaiah is immediately revealed, exposed as a son of Adam, dwelling among the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. He, a holy prophet, is revealed as profoundly unholy before God. *“Woe is me,”* he cries, *“for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”* If the prophet so assesses himself standing before God, how will it be for you? Do not say, *“That man is bad, for he is a criminal.”* No, say with Isaiah, *“I am the criminal. If he deserves prison, so do I. If he deserves punishment, much more do I. I am the man of unclean lips. Woe is me, for I am undone.”*

But the holy God who made man in the beginning does not desire His creation to come unraveled. He does not wish for you to be undone, but redone, remade, regenerated, renewed, born again, born from above.

That’s what this Trinity Sunday is about. It is often said that Trinity Sunday is the only Sunday devoted to a doctrine—a teaching—that there is one God in three persons and three persons in one God. That is true, but we can no more understand God by understanding this teaching of the Trinity than we can understand man through biology. Man is more than the working of his organs, the arrangement of his skeleton, and God is more

than a doctrine of the Trinity or a listing of His attributes (like omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, etc.).

The entire Church Year up to this point has revealed to us the Trinity in action: God the Father, who made man through the beginning through His Word, sent forth the Word to become flesh and dwell among us. That Word who took on your flesh carried your flesh, with all its weaknesses, to the cross. And there He was undone. He who knew no sin became Himself the man of unclean lips. His cry of dereliction from the cross is every man and woman of every generation crying out together, "*Woe is me!*" Rising from the dead, the Son poured out His Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and now in today's Gospel we hear what that Holy Spirit does for us in Holy Baptism: The Spirit reverses our "undone-ness," causing us to be re-done, newly done, newly made, remade and reb^{orn}irth. In this Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you get a new start, a new birth, which will culminate in a new body raised from death.

So Trinity Sunday is a day for us to rejoice in the blessed doctrine that God is love, that the Father made us out of love, the Son became man out of love, suffered out of love, died out of love, rose again out of love, took our human nature into the heavens out of love, poured out the Holy Spirit out of love, so that you could be born again out of love.

Isaiah encountered that burning love through the burning coal from the altar. "**Behold,**" said the seraphim, "*this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.*" For the sins that you have committed, and the sin that you are, our Lord gives you something better than a coal from this altar. Yet the bread burns with the divinity of Christ's flesh; and when you hear the words "The true body of Christ," hear the words of the angel speaking also to you: "This body of Christ touches your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Though you be undone in this life, it matters not. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gives you His Spirit, you are born again, you shall see the kingdom of God.

In the Name of Jesus.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

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