

Sunday, June 12, 2022 Pentecost ***“Wisdom, God and Truth”***

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-32 John 16:12-15

God in three persons Blessed Trinity! When we say the word Trinity- we as Christians believe that God is Three in 1—Father, Son and Spirit; Creator, Saviour Sustainer; Father Jesus Spirit. Each person of the trinity is different yet still God. This is a faith doctrine not easily understood yet foundational to us as followers of the son of God Jesus the Christ.

When reflecting on these passages which focus on the Trinity one must also examine the relationship between the three persons as they connect to both wisdom and truth. As we do so, we must also trust our faith to lead us to new understandings when our wisdom is not clear.

How do you define wisdom? There is a story about an accident which took place when a truck driver was passing under a bridge and had miscalculated the height of both the truck and the bridge. The truck had become wedged between the road and the bridge. The driver first attempted to back up the truck but to no avail. He thought maybe he could move forward no! He was stuck. Police officers, fire fighters, city workers concerned for the bridge were all called to assist and come to some sort of resolution. There were two alternatives—cut off the top of the truck or chop into the bridge and maybe compromise the whole span. They were unsure of what to do and how much it was going to cost to fix the bridge, the truck and all the damage. Meanwhile traffic was backed up for miles. They had to reroute everyone, not knowing how long this would take nor what to do.

In the line up not too far from the truck, a young boy and his family were watching people as they assessed the situation. The boy told his family he was going to tell them what to do. He got out of the car and ran to the truck driver. “I know what you can do!” The truck driver was ready to listen to this boy as no one else could help. The boy said, “Why not let the air out of the tires? Then back up really slowly and get unstuck? This is what they did- to deflate the situation. Was this critical thinking or wisdom?”

The book of Proverbs is filled with wise sayings accredited to King Solomon. The purpose of these statements was to teach life skills to one generation and then pass these on to the next in order to live and be prosperous. Proverbs 1 states: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, for it is fools who despise wisdom and instruction.” But what is this wisdom which, in this book is personified and given a voice, and calls in the street and questioning people and their lack of knowledge or their lack of wanting knowledge? Biblical scholars now commonly refer to this personification as “Sophia,” the Greek word for wisdom.

In Proverbs 8, Sophia speaks of herself. The purpose of wisdom is to define a quality of the soul and in particular this chapter is to praise and lift up one’s soul. The writer describes a creation story in which wisdom, as an attribute of God, was actually present at creation. She was with God before creation, and she was the master worker through whom God created. Here, wisdom is again calling out to people who are alive and willing to learn and grow. God created wisdom before anything had been made on earth, yet wisdom was present when the heavens were established. Wisdom was with God delighting him and rejoicing with the creator when the world came alive in its fullness and people. Just what is wisdom and how do we as people become wise?

What does it mean to trust another person or partner? The Winter Paralympics sports feature blind skiers who train for alpine skiing. The athletes are paired with sighted skiers. They are then taught on the flats how to make right and left turns. When this is mastered, they are taken to the slopes where the partners shout left and right as they make their way down the course to cross the finish line. The skier must depend solely on the word of the sighted skier. It is completely a blind trust as they make their way down mountainsides at top speeds not seeing where they are going but enjoying the experience focusing on the voice of their guide.

I wonder how far we would be able to trust another person even just to walk through a room in the dark? How much of our relationships are built on trust? And when we speak of God, do we fully trust God with our lives? Or is God merely a co-pilot?

Pontius Pilate asked an important question during Jesus’ trial. “What is truth?” Today we often here a qualifying paraphrase of this—what is your version of the truth? Science

discoveries are occurring almost daily. During the pandemic, vaccines were being tested and tried based upon experiments of the past. Government leaders urged us to ‘trust the science’ trust those experts in the field whose knowledge in this field is vast. But, often we do not because we like to hold on to some form of our own truth.

Sodium is an extremely active element found naturally with something else. It is always linked to another element. Chlorine we know is a poisonous gas that gives bleach its strong odour and yet it is this odour we trust to sanitize and clean messes. When we put this active element sodium with chlorine it becomes salt. The substance we use to preserve food and enhance flavours. This is truth based on science. But what is it that Jesus said prior to returning to heaven? Jesus states, “When the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all the truth for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears and will declare the things that are to come.” What is your truth? To answer this, we often look to our experience, our past successes and failures, and from these, we look to the wisdom gained from them and move forward in a stronger faith response to what might come.

Last Sunday we welcomed the Spirit as we celebrated Pentecost. Jesus had promised that the Spirit would come, well this Spirit of truth is here. Each time we breathe, there is life within us and around us. Each time we hear, taste, touch, smell, see and fully experience something new we receive again the Spirit of truth. This is because we are revived with the newness of hope. We are renewed because we expand our wisdom, knowledge and faith. This is what the Spirit does. This Spirit is our advocate, our comforter our wisdom strength and truth. The Spirit is what moves us from within. If we believe in God – the Spirit moves in to our being and through the Spirit’s wisdom and guidance we are able to do and go to people and places without fear. This Spirit is God and because Jesus said, when the Spirit of truth comes—we know that they are one—God Spirit Jesus. How do we understand this relationship?

God is three persons—and how we relate to God differs amongst us—and even within us. Sometimes like Thursday night, I see God’s creative hand painting the sky in new ways—a double rainbow appeared after the evening showers as the sun was setting. I also see God’s amazing creation- the intricate design of flowers and plants and how each person is unique.

Sometimes I think about having a conversation with Jesus, sitting in the chair beside me. Sometimes I envision him walking with me as he walked on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. And I also look for other people's images of Jesus- as paintings, narrative stories or in hymn lyrics and melodies.

I also see God in people for there is something about an individual who has a strong inner faith, a twinkle or spark comes from within them and you cannot stop it from clinging to you. But there are also moments sometimes when I breathe in and need a calming presence— whether in a meeting, alone or just needing to be reassured that what I share will be received with good intentions- I know the Spirit is present. There are moments when God is a mystery a presence; fog; cloak or even the song of an unfamiliar bird. This is the wonder of God as Trinity and how you relate to God. But no matter how you experience God, God does speak to people whose hearts are open to receive wisdom; to learn of truth and to be renewed in faith and willing to grow.

God speaks to us. Are we willing to listen? Jesus said the Spirit would come, and the Spirit is here. Let us calm our hearts- and receive the Spirit within. Let us pray:

Holy God- creator, redeemer, sustainer; we praise you and thank you that you are God- and that you come to us as we look to you with new eyes and ears. Move your Spirit amongst us- like the wind the blew on Pentecost; like the dove which descended over Jesus at his baptism; in the air we breathe in and out. Hear us O God. Call us to follow. Hear our cries for forgiveness and show us the way to love as Christ taught. Be with us O God in these moments as your Spirit is with us. Amen.