

**Preached by Rev. JF Hudson at Pilgrim Church: 5/18/08**

**Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20**

**“Don’t worry. I’m here. Everything will be alright.”**

From the text: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” --Matthew 28

Winston Churchill was once asked to describe the Russians at height of the Cold War. He described them thus: “They are a riddle, wrapped in an enigma, and surrounded by questions.” I think if most Christians were asked to describe the Trinity, the Trinity, and just how this mysterious doctrinal construct works, one God, three persons, One essence, three revelations, most of us might just answer in the same way too. For the Trinity is confusing. It’s a bit odd, difficult to wrap one’s mind around for this doctrine makes the most audacious of God claims: that God is manifest in three distinct ways: God as Father/Mother or Parent; God as the Son, fully incarnate in a human being and human history and God as the Holy Spirit, living still. But this same God is not three gods, it is just one God. Got it? OK--neither do I!

Yet there is our Trinitarian formula, among the oldest faith claims in our tradition, dating back to Jesus’ words in Matthew: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” In 1830 Pilgrim Church’s spiritual forebears were asked to leave our church home up the hill because of a nasty theological battle with the Unitarians who asked the Trinitarians to depart because they too didn’t get all this three persons/one God stuff.

The trinity is troublesome because it shows us that finally God is ineffable, ineffable, beyond human comprehension and so in order to begin to know God we use human terms to describe God. We use metaphor. So the first thing I ask us to remember this Trinity Sunday is this truth: the Trinity is a spiritual metaphor, used to try to and understand a God who finally cannot be understood, a God who can only, finally, be experienced.

So when it comes to amazing God we always start and end with metaphors: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; or fire, light and heat; or composer, singer, song (I like that one!); or speaker, word, breath. Many years ago a mentor of mine suggested another metaphor for the Trinity that has stayed with me like an old friend and I’d like to share it with us this day.

A story. It is the middle of the night. A child wakes up in his bed from a nightmare, or a bump in the dark that scares her or she just needs someone to remind her that she is not alone in the universe. And so she cries out. Down the hall the caregiver hears the child’s pleas and getting up they go to that child. All of us have known this truth as moms and dads, and grandparents and relatives, as children once. In dependability the one who loves that baby just comes, responds, goes to that infant. They reach into the crib, they pick up the baby, they soothe them and then they almost always

offer these three reassurances: “Don’t worry. I am here. Everything will be alright. Don’t worry. I am here. Everything will be alright.”

The baby—now that’s us—you, me, humanity. All humans at one time feel alone or scared or abandoned or lost or confused and so we need to know that some power, a truth underlies everything. So first our God comes to us and says to us.....”Don’t worry.” This is our “Father”, our “Mother”, the Creator—the one whose got the world in her hands! Who reminds us that everything is under control in the big picture, that we can feel safe and let go of our need to be in control because God is finally in control of everything. This is our big God, person number one in the Trinity. I think this is the aspect of God we feel most comfortable with. Huge, universal, containing all existence, powerful, providence. Alpha and Omega. The Unmoved mover. But I know for me that such a God can only do so much.

I also need a God I can wrap my arms around; a God who understands my humanity, my sinfulness, and my frailty—a God who walked the earth in dusty sandals and who shared our common lot and so in the person of Jesus, in a specific time in human history, the Creator comes down to earth and declares....

“I’m here. I’m here.” When we are in trouble there is no substitute for the real deal—face to face, heart to heart, and skin to skin. That’s why Jesus the Christ is so central to our faith. That in him, in human time, God loved the world so much, God wanted to know this world so deeply, that this God took our form, broke into human history and lived; God was formed in the womb of a woman; God sweat and wept and laughed and cried and died. This second person of the trinity is the one that gets us into major trouble with all the other world religions. No other faith is audacious enough to make this claim, yet it is this faith declaration that makes a Christian, a Christian at least from a belief perspective. “I’m here.”

But now—this God enfleshed must leave human history. Post-Easter the Gospel stories tell us the risen Jesus only stuck around for 50 days or so. But before he left he reassured his followers: “I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, and the Spirit will testify on my behalf.”

“Everything will be alright.” A child in distress needs to know and believe that everything will be alright; that the dark shadows of night and the boogeyman will give way to morning and a new day and hope. Humans need to trust that too and so God stays with us in the power and the reality of the Holy Spirit, alive, active, real, this day, now and forever, the third person of the Trinity. God does not merely come to us for a thirty-three year visit then abandon the earth, give us a nice little book of memories called the Bible and then go away. God stays. God heals. God inspires. God creates the church. God doesn’t leave. Because God is faithful, everything will be alright.

“Don’t worry. I’m here. Everything will be alright.” The God who lives is just one—and yet known in three distinct, interconnected ways. This is how God loves us. That’s my Trinity God. A God who holds up the whole world. A God who knows me as mortal because this God took on mortality. A God who is alive right now in Spirit.

“Don’t worry. I’m here. Everything will be alright.” Three persons. One God. Amen. Amen. Amen.