

You Should Hear Him Play the Spoons!

[Text - Psalm 150]

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Today, since we are celebrating both Trinity Sunday and Music Appreciation Sunday, I'm going to try to harmonize both themes in one sermon. To begin, I'd like us to try to set-aside any preconceived notions [or problems] we may have with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. To me, the Holy Trinity isn't an ancient doctrine to be defended or explained; it's an actual relationship to be experienced and celebrated. It's a relationship *within* the Divine Nature, which reveals how the Holy One relates to us, as well as how you and I can relate to others.

Two-thousand years ago, when Jesus spoke about God, he shocked and upset many of his religious contemporaries. Rather than talking about a distant and demanding deity, Jesus uses language and imagery to portray a God who is close and intimate, gracious and loving. By referring to God as "ABBA [or "Pappa"]", Jesus depicts a caring and compassionate parent, whose primary concern is for the well-being of His or *Her* children! Even though the cultural bias was to use exclusively masculine terms to describe the Holy One, Jesus uses feminine imagery: a hen gathering and protecting her brood; a woman diligently searching for

that one lost, yet precious coin. Through his use of inclusive language, and his extravagant welcome, Jesus affirms that *all* people are created in the Divine Image; and that everyone and everything within this Creation - even a falling sparrow - is known and valued by the Holy Source of Life.

With the Holy *Trinity*, we can envision how the Holy One not only starts the creative process, but continues to sustain and care for the entire Creation - at every moment in time. And at one particular moment in time, Jesus, the Christ - the Anointed One - comes to embody and exemplify that Divine compassion and care. Jesus lives his life as a genuine Child of God; and he sees in each person he encounters, that same Divine potential. He welcomes *all* to the table - to break bread and to share community - because, from Jesus' perspective, no one is excluded from that Divine Relationship. In fact, he makes it a top priority to welcome those who society and religion consider outcasts - to include those who would otherwise be tossed-aside.

Unfortunately, the pious and power-hungry leaders of Jesus' day, like many today, are threatened by this kind of open and welcoming Spirit. They have their own doctrines, rules and rituals to defend - an authoritarian system for determining who belongs, and who doesn't.

But Jesus continually breaks those rules, and breaks through those religious barriers.

“The Sabbath is made for people,” Jesus declares, “Not people to serve the Sabbath.”

“Judge not, so that you may not be judged.”

“Love your *enemies*, and pray for those who persecute you!”

In every situation, Jesus insists on doing the loving and caring thing, because that is his *nature* - his Divine nature - which reflects and reveals his Divine Source. Even when his insistence that all be welcomed and included, leads to his own rejection and condemnation, Jesus continues to trust that the Eternal Spirit of Compassion and Grace will prevail. The message of Easter is, that when the worst happens - even in the presence of Death itself - that stronger, eternal Presence of Divine Life and Love ultimately prevails! And when the time comes for Jesus to leave this time and space, the Love and Life of the Holy One continues to move and minister, through the abiding Presence of the Holy Spirit.

This Eternal Spirit - Who is present at Creation, Who lives and loves in and through Jesus Christ, continues to live and love in and through you and me today! According to Church doctrine, this is the Third “Persona” [or “manifestation”] of the Holy Trinity. And this Holy Spirit calls, inspires, and empowers you and

me to carry-forward the ministry of Jesus Christ: To feed the hungry, heal the sick, lift-up the oppressed, and proclaim the Good News of God's everlasting love.

To me, the practical value of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, is that it reminds us that it is only through our loving relationships, that we can truly embrace the Holy One; because it is within *relationship* that the Holy One lives and embraces us all. The early Church leaders developed this doctrine to affirm the intimate relationship between the Holy One who creates Life, the Christ who elevates and redeems humanity, and the Holy Spirit who continues to uplift and inspire our lives every day. Which brings us to today's second theme: Music Appreciation.

For me, gathering, worshiping and connecting with this Community of Faith on Sunday mornings, provides the help and hope that I need to function in an often dysfunctional world. And a key component of the positive energy that I experience here, comes from our marvelous Ministry of Music: a ministry that Dave Debick has faithfully led and nurtured for the past twelve years. Few people have that remarkable blend of musical ability, dedication, and playfulness of a Dave Debick. However, every person does have some talent that can be used to serve and praise the Holy One.

As this morning's Call to Worship from Psalm 150 reminds us, you and I can praise the Holy One with the sound of trumpet, with lute and harp, with tambourine and dancing, with clanging cymbals and loud clashing cymbals! In other words, it really doesn't matter *what* instrument we use, as long as we use it to praise the Holy One. And it need not be a musical instrument. You can offer praise with the sound of a snow-blower or lawnmower - here, or helping an elderly neighbor. You can praise God by rhythmically playing the spoons, or by *washing* the spoons after a Hunger Meal. Caring for this building, or providing care for a person in need, are also acts of service and praise. We can even praise the Holy One with the sound of *silence*, as we hold the hand of a grieving friend, or a troubled stranger. And according to Jesus, offering hospitality and care to those who are considered "the least" among us, may be one of the highest acts of worship that a person can perform!

I conclude, as Psalm 150 concludes: "Let *everything* that *breathes* praise the Holy One!" So...unless my sermon has completely taken your breath away...keep-on praising!