

Year A Trinity Sunday “Let Your Heart Take You to Galilee” Matthew 28:16-20

Our gospel story today picks up after Mary Magdalene and the other women have discovered the empty tomb, have been given a message – by an angel – to relay to the disciples. Go to Galilee, the angel said. Jesus will meet you there.

Really? Can you just imagine what the women and the other disciples must be thinking? The man we saw hanging dead on the cross just a few days ago is going to meet us in Galilee. Their heads must have been saying, “This is crazy” but their hearts, their hearts took them to Galilee.

With their heads and their hearts at odds with each other, is it any wonder that, when they arrived at the arranged meeting place, the Scripture tells us, “Some of them doubted.” This is along the lines of our modern saying, “I can’t believe my eyes!” Right there in front of their eyes was their dead friend...their dead teacher...the dead Messiah. Their eyes were seeing it but their brains were telling them this was impossible.

And yet they worshipped, the gospel story tells us. They worshipped and they doubted at the same time. It doesn’t mean that they didn’t have faith. It doesn’t mean that we don’t have faith when we worship and doubt at the same time. It means that God is beyond our human understanding and there are times when we know something to be true but we simply can’t explain it. The disciples knew Jesus was standing in front of them although they also knew he had died and they simply could not explain it...But they believed. They believed and they worshipped.

Over the years that the disciples had spent with Jesus, he had shown them and said to them quite a few things that were difficult for them to understand. Today

he tells them a couple more. When he sends them out into the world to spread the good news, to form a community of believers who will live differently – according to God’s way rather than the broken way of the world – he tells them to form this community by baptizing everyone in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And he tells them he will be with them always.

Jesus instructs them to baptize according to three names, not just his name. And he tells them he will be with them – each and every one of them, no matter where they go – and he will be with them forever. Amazingly, the disciples don’t question him. They more than likely don’t understand *how* these are true but they believe that they *are* true nonetheless.

It’s like pieces of a puzzle have fallen into place for them. They were Israelites...intensely devoted to the one true God but they didn’t gasp in shock when Jesus gave them three names. They still believed and worshipped one God.

The Genesis story of creation is a beautiful example of how the Israelites spoke of the mystery of one God who was beyond them and all powerful yet among them and personal at the same time. In the beginning when all was formless and dark, the *ruach* of God (the Spirit of God) hovered over the waters. And we hear the rhythm of God’s Word...And God said let there be...and it was so. God...God’s Spirit...God’s Word...all present, all active in creation.

Every act of God is an act of the Trinity. Jesus tells us that anyone who has seen him, has seen the Father. The Father and I are one, he says. Jesus tells his disciples to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because they are not separate, they are not three gods, they are One.

Our only way of distinguishing the three Persons of God are to use the identification markers of their relationship with each other – Father, Son, Spirit. They are continuously, constantly, and from eternity in relationship with each other – three Persons, one God. There is never a time, there has never *been* a time when the Father has not loved the Son. There is never a time, there has never *been* a time when the Son has not loved the Father. And there is never a time, there has *never been* a time when the love breathed out between them has not been the Holy Spirit.

The three Persons of the Trinity are eternally in relationship. We can say of God, then, that being in relationship is part of who God *is*. God can never *not* be in relationship – a relationship that is love. And we, made in God's image are intended to be in relationship. But, we live in a broken world, filled with broken institutions and broken people – our relationship with God is also broken. God, however, has a plan...there has never been a time when God's purpose was not in motion. God intends for all of creation to be reconciled – to be in relationship with God and with each other. God was made flesh and dwelt among us to fulfill that purpose. Jesus *told* us how to do it: Love God with all of your being and love others as yourself.

Then he *showed* us how to do it: Jesus Christ died and rose again to defeat the brokenness of this world. In our baptisms, when we die and rise with Christ, we have put on Christ, Paul says. We are a new creation, he tells us. We are to be transformed into the likeness of Christ – transformed into the love that is the eternal, constant, perfect love of God.

We have put on Christ. Christ is always with us just as he told his disciples he would be with them – always, even unto the end of the age. The Holy Spirit rests on us and dwells within us. The same Holy Spirit that is God. The same Holy Spirit that is the love binding three Persons as one God. The same Holy Spirit that is with the Father and with the Son, who rested on Jesus at his baptism. *That* Holy Spirit rests on us.

The Holy Spirit that lives and reigns in unity with the Father and the Son lives in us and so, amazingly, perhaps unbelievably, the Holy Spirit brings *us* into *their* relationship. Because the Holy Spirit rests on us, we rest in the love that is the relationship of the Trinity.

We must nurture that relationship, live into that relationship, allow that relationship to continuously transform us. Three vehicles for transformation available to us are prayer, scripture study, and worship – we gather together to be transformed in relationship with each other because we are members of a God who exists in relationship. Prayer, scripture study, worship – transforming us more and more into the love of God. We don't need to know *how* this is possible, we simply need to know that it *is*.

When the disciples were told that their dead Messiah wanted them to meet him in Galilee, they probably thought it was crazy...impossible...but they went. They made the 6-day trek to get there. When your head prompts you to question, to ask if things are possible, let your heart take you to Galilee.