

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 Holy Trinity 6.12.25

Once again this Trinity Sunday, I find myself amazed at the irony our readings for this day invite us into. On a day that celebrates the bigness, the grandness, the profound and ineffable character of God, we are reminded of how amazing it is to be human!

One of my favorite lines in all of traditional hymnody comes from the song *Crown Him with Many Crowns*: “Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time, creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.” What’s that mean? That’s the point. God is bigger than our words. God is the indescribable one. Trinity Sunday wants us to get lost in One we can’t explain, can’t understand, can’t fathom. And yet, today we hear from the Psalm writer: “You have made humans a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.”

Generally in the Bible, only God is said to be worthy of “glory and honor.” Here we are given that status. We’re a big deal. “You have given [us] dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under your feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea.”

Wow!! We have quite the status, which is something that the author of Proverbs in our first lesson also claims. This reading is all about wisdom, which is said to be discovered everywhere—where worship happens, where business takes place, where legal proceedings are administered. Wisdom, Proverbs is telling us, is raising her voice everywhere. Wisdom, the first of God’s creations, that which existed before everything else that is was brought into being, was in the beginning God’s daily delight, giggling before God always, rejoicing in his inhabited world *and*, we are told, delighting in the human race. God, from the beginning, with God’s partner Wisdom, delighted in us, delighted in the human race.

You know, I understand that human beings can be a real pain. I grasp that we humans can do remarkably stupid things. I agree with psychiatrist Karl Menninger who in the previous century in his book **Whatever Became of Sin** claimed that modern folks have done a disservice to all of us by downplaying the role of human sin. Sin is real. It doesn't help to hide from our misshapeness. It especially doesn't aid us to excuse people for the wrongs they commit. Agree, agree, agree. So it is a good idea to start many worship services with confession. Yet don't get lost there, as many people in religion have. Don't think that the only thing that can be said about you is how messed up you are.

I would want you to note the first thing the Bible says about humans. You know what it is? Ah, it must be, "they are all a bunch of crooks. they are all no good."

No, the first thing that the Bible says about us is that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Before it gets to sin, and yes, it gets there, the Bible tells us that we resemble God, that we are God's agents in the world. As he is a creator, we are to create. Wow! God sure has a lot of confidence in us.

And, to go back to Proverbs, God sure has a lot of fun with us. In case you didn't notice (and I am sure you all did), I translated the word from our text "rejoicing" as "giggling," because that may indeed get at the intent of the Hebrew. Wisdom was God's delight, giggling before him always, rejoicing not only in the inhabited world, but delighting in the human race.

I love the word "delight. I don't think we use it often enough. For many people, life is a drudge. Well, it's not meant to be. It's meant to be fun. According to Proverbs, God has fun. Last week we were told that he made the big sea monsters just so that he could play with them. Today we are told that he just loves to have fun with human

beings. For many, God is a sourpuss grandfather who thrives on telling people what they can't do. Well, that isn't the perspective of Proverbs. Cyndi Lauper sings that "girls just want to have fun." Well, God just wants to have fun, too—fun with us.

Now, I reflect on all of this, and I say: What a weird message on a day when we are talking about God, the grand God, the luminous God, the numinous God, the ineffably sublime God! How in the heck do we relate the Trinity to all this?

Shane Claiborne, the author of many books, including **Jesus For President**, says that the Trinity tells us that God is a "holy community." Many of us grew up in households and cultures that encouraged us to think of ourselves as lone rangers, as people who can handle life on our own. We in this land often speak of "self-made men" and "self-made women." If we take the Trinity seriously, we see that even God needs others. The Father needs the Son, and the Son needs the Spirit, the Spirit needs both the Father and the Son. I don't think we can say that God is needy, but we can say that even God needs community. Even God is vulnerable enough to know that God isn't a lone-ranger God.

Could it be that we who are humans best reflect the honor and glory of God when we are in relationship? Could it be that what makes humans a matter of delight for God is that humans are programmed for relationship? Could it be that when we are at our best we are a deeply relational people?

John Petty claims that what the Trinity tells us is that God's interior life is one of relationship. According to Petty, the God we speak of is not a passionless above-it-all monad, a Zeus-like figure who is detached from it all, watching from some heavenly space. Our God is busy in relationship. Our God is connected, involved. Jesus, the Son, reveals a God deeply embedded in human pain. The

Holy Spirit connects us to Jesus and his teachings. John Taylor calls the Spirit the Go-Between God. The Father is what Richard Rohr calls “the mystery of total given-ness,” which is to say the mystery of the sheer wonder of being itself, discovered in the everyday, ordinary privilege of breathing and living.

To say that God is Trinity is to say that God is relationship itself, that God is deeply embedded in everything that is. What then does it mean to mirror that? What does it mean to be created in the likeness of the Trinitarian God? What does the Trinity mean for us who have been made just a little lower than God, formed because God just wants to have fun?

For me, it’s very clear. It is to be involved. It is to be connected. It is to resist the temptation to live life in a detached way, to go to the dance and not dance, to hear a song but not sing along with it, to encounter healthy laughter and not giggle with it, to experience the pain of the world and not cry with it. To be created in the image and likeness of the Trinitarian God is to be truly human, to be amazingly open, to be phenomenally vulnerable.

I like what Richard Rohr says about how we address God. He contends that sometimes instead of saying “Almighty God” we would do well to say, “All Vulnerable God.” What the Trinity reveals is a God who is busy being vulnerable to the other members of the godhead. The Spirit bows to Jesus. Jesus bows to the Father. The Father is being made known through Jesus and the Spirit. It’s a wild dance. You lead. No, no, you lead. No, no, no, you lead.

Our God is no Zeus, busy asserting his Zeus-ness, being crabby and detached, never dancing. Our God gets messy in the dance, messy in relationship, messy in human pain. To be created in the image and likeness of God is to do the same, is to be vulnerable, is to be focused on relationship.

You know, you often hear people say these days that they don't have problems with God, but they do with the church, with organized religion. And I have to say that I understand some of that. The church, especially in certain corners of the world, has done some awful things, some very unhealthy things. But the church is not incidental to faith. It is integral to it. The gospel that flows from the God known as Trinity is a relational gospel. It brings people together. And yes, there can be some awkwardness to that. You never know what people are going to do or say. It's a risk to connect. You might even get hurt. There might even be pain. By the way, the God of Trinity knows that. We name that pain. It's called the cross, a symbol that clearly invites us into the risk and the vulnerability.

I know well that pain isn't fun and that vulnerability can be scary. Yet you want to know what is less fun: not dancing, not engaging, not relating. William Arthur Ward says that "the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing," is to run from pain and vulnerability.

And much to my, and probably your, surprise, when we run from them, we have a lot less fun. You see, when we let go of all the pretense, fun will chase us down. Maybe God delights in the human race when the human race lets go of the pretense, when it becomes what it was created to be: human. And when that happens, we will delight in each other, laugh at ourselves, giggle with God, and yes, become vulnerable with one another.