



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Trinity Sunday, Year B
May 27, 2018

[RCL]: Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Isaiah 6:1-8

The seraphs surrounding the throne in Isaiah's heavenly vision continually sing praise to God. Yet, this is a rather peculiar choir. They are using their wings to cover their faces and feet. They do not feel at all worthy to look upon God, nor do they feel worthy to stand before him.

We can readily understand Isaiah's panic; he, unlike these seraphs, has looked upon the living God! How can he do this when these heavenly creatures perpetually cover their faces? It is easy to see why he felt as though he had doomed himself. It is both interesting and liberating to note the radical change that occurs between Isaiah's heavenly vision and the one depicted in Revelation 4:6-8, though. The living creatures are transformed! They still sing of God's holiness, but in this account, they no longer shield themselves from God's glory. In fact, their bodies are covered in eyes. They are permitted to gaze at the Lord in all of his glory. This is the Beatific Vision that Christ has opened up to the whole of creation! Notice also how unlike John was from Isaiah. He was not afraid to gaze at the one seated on the throne!

- Do you fear gazing upon God's glory or are you eager to behold it?

Psalm 29

While Isaiah focuses on the sight of God, Psalm 29 focuses on the hearing of God's voice. The implication of this psalm is that when God speaks, something always happens. There is never a time when God opens his mouth and nothing happens. God's Word creates. God's Word shakes the whole creation. God's Word reveals the glory of the Lord. God's Word comforts and blesses the people of God with a deep sense of peace. In this psalm, we see an image of Jesus, the one through whom all things were made, and the one through whom all of creation continues to hold together. Jesus is God's voice. Whenever we hear God speak, we are encountering Jesus.

- We often think of prayer simply in terms of talking to God. Do you ever let God talk to you?
- What are some ways you can open yourself up to hearing God's voice?

Romans 8:12-17

Why is God the Father called “Father”? Have you ever thought about this? Certainly, he is a Father to us, but is that why he is called “Father”? The same goes for the Son. Why is he called the “Son”? Certainly, he is the “Son of Man,” but it is not his relationship with humanity that makes him the “Son.” Rather, the Son is the Son because he has always been the son of the Father, and the Father is the Father because he has always been father to the Son. We cannot think about one without immediately thinking about the other.

If someone becomes a father, what does this imply, but the existence of a child? This is how we are to think of the Father’s relationship with the Son. Furthermore, Paul says something rather profound in this Romans passage; he says that we have been brought into the relationship that is shared between the Father and the Son. It is the Spirit who has brought us into this loving relationship, and in Jesus’ sonship we become children of God who can also call upon the Father, crying, “Abba!”

- What is the relationship between your understanding of the Trinity and your spirituality?

John 3:1-17

“Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit” (v. 5). Jesus’ baptismal imagery is reminiscent of the first few lines of the Bible: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind (Spirit) from God swept over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2). In this Genesis account, we see the Spirit of the Lord hovering over the waters, eager to bring about and give shape to the creation. The earth, which once was a formless void, becomes animated and shaped by the Spirit of God. The same is true in baptism; we become a new creation! The Spirit stirs something new within us, and we begin the creative journey of being shaped and formed after the likeness of Christ.

- How do you tend to think about baptism? Is it merely a ritual or is it an act of new creation?

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