

It has been so hot this past week. It has been so hot that I bought a loaf of bread and when I got home, it was toast. The farmers are upset about the heat too. It has been so hot that the chickens are laying hard-boiled eggs and the cows are giving evaporated milk.

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side. The six-year-old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the boy and said quietly, “Good morning Alex.”

“Good morning pastor,” he replied, still focused on the plaque. “Pastor what is this?”

The Pastor said, “Well son, it’s a memorial to all the young men and women, from our church, who died in the service.”

Quietly, they stood together, staring at the plaque. Finally, little Alex’s voice, trembling with fear asked, “Which service, the 8:30 or 11:00?”

Today is Trinity Sunday, the day when we stand back from the extraordinary events that we’ve been celebrating for the previous five months -- Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. What we’re trying to figure out is just what the **word, the name** ”god” might actually mean.

Trinity Sunday does not get a lot of press. It cannot hold a candle to Christmas or Easter. It was not an easy doctrine to nail down for scholars. There is mystery that surrounds the person or persons of God.

People with cancer -- do not care -- this is Trinity Sunday.

Young couples who cannot get pregnant -- do not care either.

**Families dealing with the wayward teenager – Those having
relationship problems – The person who has lost a job**

It does not matter to them that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

They **want to know** that God is God –

that God **cares** who they are –

where they are –

what they are doing –

what they need.

N.T. Wright, a scholar and theologian states that our God comes to us like no other god – a very different god, a dangerous god, a subversive god,

a god who comes to us like a blind beggar with wounds in his hands,

a god who comes to us in wind and fire,

in bread and wine, in flesh and blood,

a god who says to us,

‘You did not choose me; I chose you.’

Psalm 8 asks, “Who are we that God is mindful of us?” We ask ourselves, “Does God care about me? Has God forgotten me?”

I agree that God chooses us first, but **I also believe there comes a time in our lives when we CHOOSE to be CHOSEN.**

Will we choose to be chosen, choose to lead a Christian life or will we look elsewhere to satisfy our desires?

In a Wednesday evening worship service at The Source a couple of months ago, Marti Long was leading the worship and she said, which I have her permission to repeat. “I have been a Democrat; I have been a Republican; I have been an Independent. All I really want to be is a Christian!”

That statement really hit home with me. First because I, too, have been a Republican, a Democrat and an Independent. However, the bottom line for me is, **“All I want is to follow Christ. I want the name, Christian, emblazoned on my heart and evident in my life.”** In other words, that is the **NAME** I want people to remember me, but here is the irony of being called a Christian.

Friday morning in our Stephen Ministry meeting, Bud Simpson read a poem by Carolyn Wimmer. It is titled, “When I say I am a Christian.”

“When I say, “I am a Christian” I’m not shouting, “I’ve been saved!”
I’m whispering, “I get lost sometimes, that’s why I chose this way.”

When I say, “I am a Christian” I’m not trying to be strong
I’m professing that I’m weak and pray for strength to carry on.

When I say, “I am a Christian” I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartache which I why I seek **God’s name.**

What is so important about a name, and a name such as *Christian*? Names in ancient times conveyed a person's presence; their very "nature, power, and reality" of who they were and their relationship to the divine. When we call someone by his or her name, we begin to build a relationship. When we call God by God's names, we begin to build a relationship with God.

As we celebrate Trinity Sunday, we have three names to think about God/Father; Jesus Christ/Son; and the Holy Spirit/Advocate/Comforter. When we sing, Holy, Holy, Holy, we sing of things we cannot fully grasp; one God, three persons. When we look up into the sky at night, we see wonders upon wonders, knowing there are billions of stars in our galaxy. Do we fully grasp the meaning of a galaxy that is a 100,000-light-year expanse?

Psalm 8 presents a *paradox* to *ponder*: how majestic is God's **name** in all the earth and how oh so small and seemingly inconsequential is our place in the universe! We know God's name is awesome! But are we so inconsequential that no one notices us?

Scripture says, Jesus calls his own sheep by name. Your name, your birth name, is important to God, to you, to your family, your colleagues, and your friends. We certainly don't like it when someone calls us by something other than our name. God responds to us when we call God by God's name.

Psalm 8 affirms that we are made a little lower than God -- we are crowned with glory and honor. Here, God confers the divine nature upon humanity. I hope you are beginning to feel more confident about your place in the world. You are God's chosen Kings and Queens. You are empowered to rule everything else on earth created by God. Nevertheless, God's majesty and power still rules over us.

“What are human beings, that you are mindful of them?” God chooses a relationship with us that goes on and on and on. God knows who we are, but we may never know why God...

always loves us,

always forgives us,

always cares for us.

We have questions and doubts. We wonder if our questions and doubts can coexist in the world with God's love and mercy. We're always looking for answers but we don't have to have an answer. We can believe without having the answer. We can simply say, **“Wow,” “Thank you,” “Help me!”**

In our Matthew text, Jesus is not asking us to perform baptism just to get everyone wet. We are to teach and make disciples – disciples are students. Go and make students of Christ. We are called to lead people into a lifelong learning process about who God is! I learn from you, from Marti Long and Bud Simpson. I have no doubt, that you are sitting by someone who can help make you a disciple.

We cannot make ourselves or anyone else a student of Christ without the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon what and who Jesus was and is. Christ keeps pointing to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. **Therein lies the power.** It is in the Trinity, in the fullness of God, to which we are empowered to go out and make more disciples.

Jesus gave his disciples, you and me the same empowering fellowship with the triune God that Jesus has. Jesus had already given the disciples power to cast out unclean spirits, heal the sick and proclaim the good news. Now, Jesus adds teaching to one of the charges he gives to his disciples.

Jesus is asking his disciples go out and do what he has been doing. How can we do the same as Jesus without the power that was available to him? We can only access that power to heal, proclaim, and teach in our relationship to Jesus and his relationship to the triune God.

The Good News is God is relational. God is self-giving. God exercises powerfulness by giving. God gives us Jesus and Jesus in turn gives us the Holy Spirit. These persons of God, all self-giving, give us the power to go out and do ministry that, on paper, seems impossible. Jesus invites his disciples and us into the mutuality and power of the divine life. He does not leave us alone in that work, nor does he leave us powerless.

However, life takes its toll on our dreams and us. We may have come here today feeling detached, isolated, alone, angry, deserted, depressed, grieving, hopeless, fearful, anxious, wounded, ashamed, and tired. **The good news** of the Trinity is this, wherever we are in life, all three dimensions of God are with us!

We are immersed into the whole being of God, whether we understand it or not. **We are NOT powerless** in the world; **we are NOT disconnected** from a God somewhere way far away.

We are transformed through the redeeming work of God in human flesh, Jesus Christ. **We are filled with the indwelling Spirit**, the very presence of God, to teach and guide us.

We remember Trinity Sunday not because we have it all figured out, but because God chooses us and God comes to us, around and through us, building us up, encouraging us, challenging us, with such wonders as non-judgmental love, unending forgiveness, powerful healing and compassion, gentleness, kindness, with joy and peace for us to live into. What glorious gifts to celebrate!

Yes, Jesus calls us to do that which seems utterly impossible until we completely throw ourselves onto the strength of God, God's Son and the Holy Spirit. **Friends in Christ immerse yourselves into the whole being of God, whether you fully grasp all the relationship pieces or not.**

Maybe Trinity Sunday should be a bigger deal. It offers us the entire being of God in a relationship that we do not deserve but we can choose to be chosen. Let us celebrate God's powerful name and our Christian faith. Amen.