

This weekend is the Memorial Day holiday. For many it is a time of barbecues and get togethers. We sometimes forget that the purpose of the Holiday is to remember those who gave their lives for us and for the freedoms that we possess. One look around the world tells us that we are almost the exception, rather than the rule. So when you pray, thank God for those who were willing to serve, and for those who gave their all – and are still giving their all.

This weekend also marks the beginning of the Summer season, although it officially won't start for a few more weeks. We are almost finished the Spring Season, which followed Winter and Fall Seasons. If we remember God's promise after the flood, He said that the seasons would not cease – and they haven't since the time of the great flood during the days of Noah.

The other season that changes is the Seasons of our Liturgical calendar. The Liturgical calendar begins at Advent, goes through the Christmas Season, Epiphany, the Pre-Lenten Season, Lent and then the Easter Season, followed by the Sunday's after Easter, culminating in the Ascension, the Sunday after the Ascension, and Whitsunday, or Pentecost which we celebrated last week, remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Today is Trinity Sunday – the only Sunday in the Church Year that is named after a doctrine – rather than the events of our Savior's life, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc. And the Sundays after today are known as the "Sundays after Trinity." So, we begin today the Trinity Season.

Without exaggeration, other than the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ – which is the foundation of our faith – and only Christianity has the person of work of Christ — in order of importance the Trinity – God in Three persons – is central to our Christian faith – and only Christianity has the Trinity.

Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Islam – any cult or religion that you can name does not have the Trinity.

Now I do have to tell you that the Doctrine of the Trinity is one of the hardest Doctrines of our Christian faith to fully understand. If someone says that they fully understand the Doctrine – I can, with reasonable assurance say that they don't know what they are talking about! One of the reasons that it is so difficult is that the word "Trinity" is not found in the Scriptures. This is one of the main reasons why the other religions and cults reject it.

The Doctrine of the Trinity states that we have one God – who is three persons – The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit. Again, only one God – not three God's.

While the word "Trinity" is never used in the Scriptures we find Trinitarian formula – The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit – in a few ways in the Scriptures.

First, there is the Baptismal formula where Jesus instructed his disciples – and us, to Baptize using the three persons of the Trinity. As we read in Matthew 28:18-19: "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ...*" We notice here that our Savior says: "*in the name*" – and it is singular, not plural – so the Trinity is one God.

We also see the Trinitarian viewpoint in the letters that we have recorded for us in the New Testament. For example in 1 Peter 1:1-2: *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”*

Here we see that all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned – and all have a part to play in our salvation.

As I said, we know that there is only one God – it is the very First Commandment that God has given us: *“I am the LORD thy God; Thou shalt have no other god’s before me.”*

It is something that is confirmed in the New Testament – in passages such as the Great Commandment in Mark 12:29-30: *“Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.”*

Ephesians 4:6: says, *there is “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”* And a verse that studied a few weeks ago in our Tuesday Bible study from 1 Timothy 2:5: *“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,”*

Yet, as I have pointed out, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we find all three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – active in the work of our salvation.

Romans 8 shows us clearly how all three persons are active in our salvation. It reads, in part: Romans 8: *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit ... 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His ... 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God... 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”*

We notice clearly how the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are used interchangeably – again, again how all three persons are there – and yet there is only one God.

Other passages of Scripture confirm this. The grace in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is Trinitarian: *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”*

We also see this in the prayer for grace and peace from Revelation 1:4-5: *“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,”*

We know that there is one God. We also know that Jesus is God. He said: *“I and the Father are one.”* We also know that this is one of the reasons that the Jews tried to kill him, because he made himself equal with God.

And then in Acts 5:1-4: we read: *“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”*

Here we see that lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God. Again, the consistency – One God – three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The point of this – and remember the Trinity is one of the unique characteristics of Christianity – is that all three persons are active in our Salvation and in our lives.

For example, consider the Collect for Purity and the beginning of our Communion Service: *“Almighty God, unto who all hearts are open, all desires know, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

We see that we pray to the Father, asking the Holy Spirit will convict us of our sins and we pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord, because it is through him that we have access to the Father.

Again, as we compare Scripture with Scripture we know that we pray to the Father, through the Son, which is then applied by the Holy Spirit. We read in Romans 8:26-27: *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

So my friends the doctrine of the Trinity is not some esoteric teaching, but at it’s root is one of the essential teachings of our faith that has application to our everyday Christian lives.