

Grace and peace are yours in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you heard the expression, "I'd rather be at the dentist than..." I trust you get the point, doing this thing is so painful, I'd rather be experiencing the pain of the dentist than that. Well, this really happened to me, by the hand of God. I was literally at the dentist. The hygienist finished the cleaning and I was waiting alone in the room for the dentist to come. My phone rang. I answered. The person said, "Hey, I saw from your church website that you are a pastor and I wanted to ask you a biblical question." How cool is that! Yes, I'm a pastor and I love talking about the Bible. The person continued, "I see that you believe in the Trinity." "Absolutely!" I answered. Wow, someone who knows the Bible and the terminology. Then the person said, "I wanted to show you that the Trinity is not true. There's only one God." And he proceeded on and on. And when I quoted different parts of the Bible like from this section, the response was, "Well, that's not right. There's only one God." The whole conversation was only about three minutes, but I'll tell you, I was glad when the dentist came in and I could say, "I'm sorry, I have to go. I'm at the dentist." I would literally, truthfully rather be at the dentist than argue about the Trinity.

But here we are, on Trinity Sunday, diving into the depths that God reveals himself as one God, but three persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Talk about a conundrum, an oxymoron. How can one be three and three be one? Even a kindergartener can tell you that's bad math. The Christian Church even invented the word Trinity to describe this unexplainable truth, three in one, one in three. But here's the good news. This Triune God loves you from all angles. It's not just one God who loves you. It's the Father who loves you. The Son who loves you. The Holy Spirit who loves you. And yet they are not three who love you, but one who loves you. They are always united in their love, united in their goal of giving you eternal life and getting you to heaven. Yes, there are ten sermons in these verses in front of us and it pains me to not preach nine of them today. But we will focus on this one: The Triune God loves you from all angles. Love. From all angles.

Jesus directs his disciples, followers, close friends, who not only listened and learned from him, but changed their lives to follow him. They went to the mountain where Jesus directed them. Jesus had already risen from the dead and appeared to these eleven on several occasions. So when they saw him, they worshipped him. The word implies they fell on their faces for all they were worth, because they were in the presence of one who was worth more than they were worth. And yet, and yet, and yet, did you catch it? Some hesitated because they were uncertain. Uncertain it was Jesus? Uncertain Jesus would forgive them for their past, running away, leaving him alone? Uncertain what their role was now in their teacher's plan? They doubted what to do and maybe had deeper doubts if Jesus still wanted them at all.

Can we see a mirror shining here? Doubts? Hesitating? What does Jesus want me to do? Does Jesus want me at all? I've doubted his love so much and so often during these last months. How could a loving Father take away my graduation? How could a forgiving Son really forgive my doubts, you don't know how bad they were? How could a loving Spirit let my faith falter to where I have cried and shaken my fist and doubted there could be a god at all? And worship. Hey, the online thing has been great. I could worship on my terms, at my time, in my pajamas, in my house. As though worship is all about me and

how much I am worth. That's weak worship, even if it's every week. That sounds like worship of me and my schedule and my wants. Isn't Jesus worth more than that? How could a Triune God, how could any God, love people like that?

And yet he does, loves us from all angles. Notice baptizing in the name. One name. One God. But a God who is three persons and loved us from all angles. The Father loved you before the creation of the world. Think about that! Before you were, before the world was, the Father loved you. The Father loved you so much he came up with a solution before there was ever a problem. He developed a plan before there was ever a need. The Father created a perfect world. Yes, the Son and the Holy Spirit were there as well. And when the Father's most precious creation ruined his perfect world, the Father announced restoration. A seed. A Son. A Savior.

That Son, the Son, followed the Father's plan. The Son gave up his perfect place in heaven and came to earth. He became one of us, a real human, subject to pain he never felt before, temptation he never had to experience, but with one big difference from us. He never sinned. The Son loved you by living a perfect life. Yes, he experienced hunger and thirst and sadness and sorrow, even to the point of death. Yes death, the Son gave up an existence in which he couldn't die, to die. For you. What love! Who else shows this kind of love, to live every day, for you? To die, in your place. Then to rise and prove that you will rise, to live and prove that you will live. I can't comprehend that kind of love. Only in God do I see that kind of love, in life, in death, in resurrection.

I can't comprehend it. I can't understand it. Yet, I believe it. Why? The Holy Spirit. He drowned my doubts in the deluge of baptism. I really wanted a d word there, but baptism doesn't start with d. The Holy Spirit washed away my sins of weak worship. The Holy Spirit made Holy all my hesitation. You see how baptism and the Triune God are tied together? Do you see why we start worship every time in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit? That reminds all the baptized: this Triune God loves me from all angles. This Triune God washed me clean of all my sin, every which way I can think about it. This one name, and these three persons, showed compassion I will never completely comprehend, forgiveness I will never fully fathom, but salvation that swaddles my soul from all angles. You know, not every conversation I have had about the Trinity is worse than being at the dentist. I've had the Father, the Son and especially the Holy Spirit change hearts so I have heard this. "You know pastor, I'm just gonna tell you up front, before we start this Bible 101 thing, that I'm gonna have a real problem with the Trinity, this three and one and one and three thing, come on!" So I say, "Ok, that's not lesson one. We'll get to that." So we start with lesson one: I'm sure I'm going to heaven because Jesus lived and Jesus died and Jesus rose. We repeat that lesson two, sin, I really need Jesus. We explore and explain it lesson three, grace, God's underserved love. We apply it lesson four, faith, God gave me trust in Jesus as my Savior. And by the time we get to the Trinity, we have seen God's love from so many angles, we have repeated so often, "Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus rose. That's why I'm sure I'm going to heaven." By the time we get to the Trinity, I usually hear, "I still don't get this. But I know God loves me. And if I get God's love, he can be 33 persons." You see, the Trinity isn't about logical reasoning. The Trinity is about our loving God loving us from all angles.

So when the Triune God says, "Go!" We say, "How far? Let me go and spread this love!" When he says, "Gather disciples," we say, "Yes, God, as many as we possibly can." Baptizing? Definitely delighted. Teaching? Absolutely! We won't shy away from the tough stuff like the Trinity. We will teach people to keep on keeping all the instructions. And when we get discouraged? When we think nobody wants to

listen? We'll remember your promise: surely I am with you always until the end of the age. Our Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is with you, with us. Literally all the days, every single day until the end of the age. And that word end has a special meaning. It's more than just something is over. It has the idea that there was a master plan, there was a grand purpose and that grand master brought everything together and not until he brought everything together and not until the grand master achieved his master plan could there be this culmination.

You see, we aren't just marching along and marking time until the world ends. We are part of this master plan, that the Triune God established before the world began. That master plan is that all people, all over the world, hear the good news, "Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus rose." Think the recent rise in technology is helping with this? The Triune God wants all people to be saved, believe this good news. And he wants to use us! The grand master plan is to use us, to go, to gather, to baptize, to teach. Think about it. The Triune God already did all the hard stuff. Created the world. Came to earth. Died on a cross. Gave us faith. Laid out opportunities in advance for us. Just like so many people did so much to make a car. Designed the parts, assembled the parts, delivered the parts in a car to the lot. All I have to do is put in a key and turn it and move a lever and step on a pedal. And don't I take comfort in knowing that all the things I don't understand about a car, someone else does? And someone else can fix this car, even though I don't have a clue?

In the same way, take comfort, that you don't understand everything about the Triune God. That's what makes him God. He's so great, he's beyond our understanding. He's so wise, he has solutions for things before we even create the problem. He's so loving, he invented the grand master plan to fix our sin before there even was sin. He's so personal, his love chose you before you were born, and baptized you maybe when you were too young to remember. That's a loving God. That's our Triune God, who loves us from all angles. Amen.

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit love you from all angles. Amen.