

A sermon preached at Zion Episcopal Church  
Trinity Sunday, Year B, May 27, 2018  
The Rev. Lucy D. LaRocca  
Texts: John 3:1-17, Romans 8:12-17

Today is Trinity Sunday, the traditional time for clergy to turn themselves into pretzels trying to explain the Trinity with an easily understood metaphor. I've fallen into that trap in the past, bringing out icons and pictures of clover, going on about motor oil...but the truth is, that the nature of God is pure mystery and those who claim to understand it fully are fooling themselves. And fully understanding God is of course, not our ultimate goal in life anyway. Perfect understanding is not what faith is all about; not even close.

The best I've come to understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is to think of God not as just one person but as a relationship or a dance between persons. And this relationship or dance is one which we are already part of and are invited to participate in.

We truly we don't know how it is that God would explain God's nature or relationships. But we have are the words of Jesus, who spoke of God as his loving Abba, and who called us his friends. These things in themselves can be hard to take in and harder still to live into.

Perhaps you have heard the story about the chicken farmer who found a large egg. He put it with his brooding hens and soon the egg hatched. It was no chicken, it was an eagle. That young eagle grew up with all the other chickens and whatever they did, the eagle did too. He thought he was a chicken, just like them.

They scratched the earth to find bits of corn and grubs to eat, so that is what he did as well. Since the chickens could only fly for a short distance, the eagle also learned to fly just short distances. He thought that was what he was supposed to do. So that was all that he thought he could do. And as a consequence, that was all he was able to do.

One day the eagle saw a bird flying high above him. He was very impressed. "Who is that?" he asked the hens around him. "That's the eagle, the king of the birds," they told him. "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth, we are just chickens."

So the eagle lived and died as a chicken, for that's what he thought he was. The moral of the story is, Don't die thinking you're a chicken. You were created in the image and likeness of God. We aren't chickens, we are meant for so much more, We were meant to soar.

This is what Jesus meant about us being born from above and being led by the spirit of God. Each one of us was created in the image and likeness of God. If we live according to the Spirit we show that we know that we are children of God.

And this was the same message that Paul of Tarsus was trying to convey to his readers in Rome. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

We are co-heirs with Christ, we are named beneficiaries of God's will. Each one of us has an inheritance and a legacy to claim. And part of our legacy is this- to let others know that they too, Are made in the image and likeness of God and share that inheritance with us.

Too often we forget these things. We forget who we are and whose we are when we give in to despair over current circumstances. We forget who we are and whose we are when we give in to the temptation to think that we are ever alone; when we think that we are put on this earth for our own benefit or to serve only a very small circle of people. We forget who we are and whose we are when we give in to the fear that we will be mocked or that we will fail; when we think that we are not good enough or powerful enough or 'whatever' enough.

Far too often we ask God to do something for us when God is actually longing to do those things through us. God is longing for us to join the dance already in motion; for us to listen to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit, rise above our fears and temptations, and take even the first few steps in a new direction.

We were made for relationship with God and with one another, a relationship of pure love; a transforming, life changing, powerful love. We might not be able to parse out the workings of the Trinitarian nature of God. But we can understand love. It is the very power of God; poured out for us. Trusting in this love is what our faith is all about, and what can give us the courage and the joy and the hope we need to soar on the wings of God's love. Amen.