

John 16:14-16 He [the Spirit] will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

A young man wanted to learn the art of fly fishing. He attended a class where the instructor laid out the basics of the gear to use, how to cast the line, how to wade quietly through the water. The young man was right there with the instructor. The material was well laid out. The points flowed ever so logically. Class was almost over. As a mere formality the teacher asked the student, “Are there any questions before you go out there and fly fish for the first time?” The man thought for a moment and then responded, “Just one question. Fly fishing sounds like a lot of fun, but what do you do with the flies once you catch them?”

Has it ever happened that you thought you had explained something to someone only to have your hopes dashed by the questions that they ask or the foolish response that they give? Jesus certainly did. Throughout his ministry, and especially during his last hours with his disciples, Jesus had taught the truth of the Trinity. Sadly, people of all times have consistently demonstrated by words and actions that the Trinity remains a mystery to them. But God graciously opens his classroom to us this morning so that we might know by faith and live by grace to praise our Three-in-One God. And as we take a seat in our desks this morning, please...

Consider the words of our lesson and the circumstances that surround them. Its Maundy Thursday evening - the day before Jesus will die on the cross. Jesus is gathered with his disciples. After three years of daily instruction by Jesus it's final exam time. (For those who have already finished the school year or are in the midst of exams, I apologize if I made you break into a cold sweat just now.) But in a way, that was very

much what it was. All of Scripture and all of Jesus' instruction have pointed them to the events that are about to take place. Ok then, lets correct their exams and see how they do!

Now, it's one thing if we don't understand the Trinity – nothing new, right? But on the eve of the disciples' final exam they're asking Jesus questions like this- “Who are you?” “What are you doing?” “Where are you going?” By their questions they show that they understand Jesus and the Trinity about as well as a kindergarten student understands a physics lab at MIT!

Not only do they not understand the Triune God, they *disown* the Triune God. According to John's Gospel the twelve disciples are now down to eleven as Judas has already left the scene to go and sell his Savior along with his own soul. As for Peter the rock- Jesus has explicitly warned Peter that he will disown Him three times -*within the next 12 hours!*

There is no grading curve in the world that is going to cover up the utter failure of the disciples. They have failed to know him. They have failed to obey him. The consequence of their failure is not a do-over or a repeat next year. The consequence of their failure is eternal death!

Someone once said, “A pastor is a dead man preaching to those who are dying.” That humbling phrase reminds us that the grade we are forced to issue to the disciples is the same grade God in his justice must issue to us.

We have failed...failed to know the Triune God. And we demonstrate it regularly. Like when someone in the work place asks us to **give the reason for the hope that we have**. Do we? Or do we respond by changing the subject as quickly as possible because religion makes us uncomfortable. The interesting question there becomes is it our Savior that makes us uncomfortable, or our lack of knowledge about him, our failure to *know* him that makes us uncomfortable. Suddenly the disciples' questions on Maundy Thursday don't seem so distant from our own minds.

And as far as failing to *obey* the Triune God, take a look at the preparation

for Holy Communion and see how you did. Yes, when you think about it, Peter in the courtyard doesn't seem so long ago or so far away from our lives does it?

No, the grade for the disciples and the grade for ourselves are the same. Its final exam time and guess what. We have failed and failed miserably.

When a child disobeys, one of the most natural forms of punishment is to take something away from the child. We hear parents saying, "Stop doing that or I'll take it away." Because of *our* sin God has properly taken away our status as his children, his heirs. We have lost our relationship with him. We have lost the blessings of His kingdom. But Jesus the promised Son of God was born into this world to restore what we lost...

...and it begins at the cross. You see, we rightfully identify Jesus with his death on the cross. The cross is of greatest importance to us because on it Jesus took away the penalty for our sin. John testifies to the saving death of Christ when he calls out to the Savior, "**Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World.**" – (John 1: 29).

But it is equally important to remember what Jesus did beyond the cross. In contrast to our disobedience Jesus' ministry on this earth is sandwiched by that wonderful proclamation from God the Father- "**This is my Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.**" – (Matthew 3: 17, Matthew 17: 15). Based on Jesus' perfect obedience, John in his Gospel reminds us that the relationship and blessings of Eden that *we* lost *Jesus* has won and more. Jesus himself says in our text, "**All that belongs to the Father is mine.**"

In the story of Cinderella the prince scours his kingdom looking for that one perfect princess who can slip her foot into that impossible glass slipper. God scours the earth looking for someone, anyone who is righteous, who is found still remaining in his Holy Image. Disgusted at the flawed feet of man that cannot so much as fit a toe into God's law successfully, he finally finds his own image reflected perfectly in his own Son Jesus. Fitting perfectly into the glass

slipper of God's Image, God gives all things to his son.

Beautiful story, but all of this would be just a story were it not for the fact that God now takes what has been perfectly worn by the Son and fits it to us by faith. Jesus says in our lesson, "**He [the Spirit] will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.**"

Remember how the disciples struggled even after being carefully instructed by Jesus for three years? They did not *understand* God, nor did they *obey* God. For goodness sake! *God was standing right in front of them teaching them!* And yet, *their* disbelief even after being taught by God himself helps us to understand the depth of *our* spiritual blindness, *our* indifference, *our* desire to leave it someone else.

What is the answer that even Jesus the perfect Son of God turns to? He says, "**He [the Spirit] will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.**" Doubt and disobedience is overcome by the Spirit who teaches us about Jesus. The Holy Spirit *announces, reminds, teaches, and convicts.* Just as he would "**live with them and be in them.**"- (John 14: 17), so he takes things that were impossible to us and makes them possible through his tools of grace.

And that is what understanding the Trinity is all about. Because you see, "getting" the Trinity isn't about analogies or illustrations, it isn't about instructions or explanations. The only "getting" to be got is the understanding that comes by grace, through faith...the understanding of what Father, Son, and Spirit have done and continue to do and will do for you from this day forward until he calls you to glory or until he comes again in glory to take us home. Oh, I know, we'll still have questions. They'll continue until that moment of perfect clarity when we cross the threshold of our eternal home. But for now we rejoice in his grace, we reside in his arms, we rely on his promises and we resound with his praises. For we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.