

## Scripture Reading:

**Luke 12:1-12** “1 In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, Jesus began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. 4 "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. 10 And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. 11 Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.””

## *"Fearing the One True God"*

We have continued to work our way through Luke’s Gospel this year during our celebration of Ascension Sunday, Pentecost Sunday and now Trinity Sunday because the passages have worked nicely with what we should focus on each year for these important Sundays...

- We celebrated Christ’s bodily ascension to God’s right hand
- We studied the impact of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit to the Church at Pentecost
- This week is Trinity Sunday and we will celebrate the covenant wonders of our gracious Triune God

Jesus tells us we should fear the one True God: As we often see in the Scripture as one draws close to God:

- A crushing realization of our own sin & shame
- And the wonder of God’s glory!
- It is what gives us the proper perspective for all of life!

**It is reflected each week in our worship service as we respond to God's call to enter into His presence and immediately confess our sins and hear again that we are forgiven ONLY because of the work of His Son Jesus. Then by the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit we saw come down to empower the Church last week, we are lifted up into the very presence of God where He instructs us from His Word, receives our gifts of riches and prayers and invites us to this glorious Table each week!**

**Each week we see the gracious work of our Triune God as the Father calls us, the Son assures us and the Spirit lifts us up... This is the great God we serve and boldly proclaim each week and today, we focus on His nature as we celebrate Trinity Sunday. Each service Theron proclaims, "In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" to which we give a hearty AMEN. As we gather to partake of the Lord's Supper we confess our faith together with the Apostle's Creed, the great Trinitarian creed to which all true Christians must subscribe. It is important that we do this each week AND it is important that we not let it just become routine...**

**Now some might say that even following the Church calendar or having a focus like Trinity Sunday is the very leaven of the Pharisees that Jesus again warns His disciples to avoid!**

- **The Christian faith should not be about formulas, doctrines, special days, or laws... It is about having a personal relationship with Jesus**

**We and the Bible certainly agree and if you have all those things and even LOTS of good works BUT you don't know Jesus, you are lost... As Jesus proclaimed near the end of the Sermon on the Mount: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [Matthew 7:21-23]**

**To avoid this, the great cry in many evangelical circles is...  
"we have no creed but Christ!"**

**In response to this it would be proper to ask, "then who is this Christ?"**

**The Evangelical believer would rightly say, the Christ of the Bible!**

- **What they have forgotten is that this is exactly what the great creeds of the church present and as such they should not be forgotten!**

**We read together the Apostle's Creed most weeks because it is simple and universal. Visiting Saints might join us for worship from a lot of different churches and backgrounds. Over lunch we could spend time talking over various doctrinal concerns we might have!**

**BUT if they have been baptized and can honestly affirm the Apostle's Creed then they are welcome to feast with us at the Lord's Table!**

**This morning, and on other selected occasions we read the Athanasian Creed: It is longer and much more detailed, proclaiming what we believe about the two greatest mysteries that God has revealed: His existence as the great Triune God and the Incarnation of Jesus! The Church calendar moves us through both mysteries each and every year, reminding us of what is central, just as Jesus did with His disciples in our reading this morning: We must fear God rather than man and we must fear the one true God! We begin with the season of Advent which celebrates the Incarnation: God with us! The work and ministry of Christ is completed at the cross, we see Him ascended in power to the right hand of God the Father and then the Spirit sent to empower the church. Trinity Sunday then wraps all of this up for us by proclaiming the wonder of our Triune God and preparing us to “hear and do the Word of God” for the remainder of the church year, which we call ordinary or normal time**

- **Then we begin it all over again with Advent.**
- **These should be the milestones in our lives much more so that the beginning of the school year or the fourth of July!**

**So if we are going to rightly fear the one True God, we must have some grasp of these great mysteries. Now the skeptics will quickly point out that we are being irrational:**

- **How can one God be Three Persons?**
- **How can Jesus be fully God & fully Man?**

**These skeptics do not escape the problem: *Use the example of the “big bang”***

**How will they ever solve the philosophical dilemma of the one and the many? The universal & the particulars. These are real problems that have real consequences: Whether it is humanist nations that slaughter tens of millions of individuals for the good of the many or the many individuals today who find no meaning for their lives and then strike out at others or commit suicide, or both!**

**We proclaim ourselves to be Trinitarian because this is what makes us Christians: AND different! As C.S. Lewis points out, we may have many rooms in this house he calls Mere Christianity, with some of them in very poor repair, and yet there is a vast chasm between this house and all others!**

- **So as we consider how we must rightly fear God today, let us quickly review what we know about our mighty God!**

**Kids, we are going to get to learn another of those BIG words today:**

**As part of our confession this morning we will say in part:**

**“The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible... As also there are not three incomprehensibles, but one Incomprehensible.”**

**So what does the creed mean when it says that God is incomprehensible?**

- **The easy answer is that God is God and you are not!**

**Think about it this way: People often say to comprehend something is to get ones hands around it: If I am told to comprehend a teddy bear, that is something I can handle, seeing what it was made of, how big it is, and certainly putting my arms around it!**

**If I am told to comprehend Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, I would struggle to explain how it was made, could not tell you how much it weighs and I certainly cannot see myself putting my arms around it!**

- **Does this mean I can comprehend one and not the other?**
- **Again, God is beyond our full comprehension because He is God!**

**If the creed were teaching that we have no comprehension of God, why would there even be a creed.... That would make us like the modern skeptic who loudly pronounces that they ARE NO absolutes.... Absolutely!**

- **The wonder of the Bible is that God HAS revealed Himself too us!**

**This is why we have Trinity Sunday in the Church calendar and why we recite the great creeds of the church. So how do we comprehend the incomprehensible?**

**There have been lots of suggestions made and most of them are wrong and will lead to heresy... so be careful what you teach your children**

**Some say the Trinity is like an egg with a shell a yolk and egg white:**

**You have three parts and one egg, but none of the parts is truly an egg. No different that pagan polytheism: Three gods working together or one great god with the son and spirit serving him: JW's or Mormons**

**Some say the Trinity is like water, which is solid as ice, liquid in a glass or steam rising from a boiling pan?**

**Now you have one substance, water appearing in three different forms. This is modalism and has infected many Christian churches teaching that God was "the father" in the Old Testament, came as the Son in the New Testament and now we know him as the Spirit. No different than the Muslims!**

**Better to stand on the shoulders of the great Saints who have fought these battles in the past and not start from scratch each generation!**

**God exists as a Trinity: Three persons who are each God existing as the one true God...**

**Again C.S. Lewis comes as close as anyone because he begins with the proper basis of the creeds, that God is incomprehensible - *give his example***

- **The bottom line is that we believe what God has revealed about Himself and not what we think He should be like or even just what we THINK the Scripture teaches about Him**

**You can spend a lifetime studying what God has revealed and you will still have more to learn and you will no more “fully” comprehend Him than I can put my arms around half dome: But that does not mean you cannot know Him, worship Him and love Him, just as I can admire half dome, climb half dome and fear half dome as I think about fall off that 3,000 foot sheer face!**

**And that brings us to our text from Luke chapter 12:**

**It begins with the warning from Jesus about the leaven of the Pharisees... hypocrisy**

**When you think back on all the woes we read last week, one thing that comes through loud and clear is that they were know-it-alls!**

**They are not unlike the JW's or Mormons who might visit our doors KNOWING all kinds of Bible verses and stories but insisting that God be brought down to our size!**

**Jesus then teaches the disciples the lesson I want to leave you with on this Trinity Sunday: He says to them “do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say fear Him!”**

**We are trying to be practical in our applications this year, so allow me give you just a few examples of where we as modern Americans have our “fears” in the wrong place:**

#### **Coming under judgment:**

**While there are many discussions about the proper roles of church and state today, all of the fear has shifted to the state: They have the death penalty... If you commit a capital crime they can KILL your body!**

**... Just like Jesus said, but they can do NO more**

**Very few today have any fear of the Church because what can they do?**

**Try to scare people or maybe excommunicate them?**

- **Do you see how backwards we have this?**

**Jesus said that what is bound on earth by His disciples is bound in heaven which means a judgment from the church could put your soul in danger of eternal hell fire!**

- **The state has NO such power!**

**You will be hearing more from Mike and Theron on this next month because it is important that we get this perspective right and teach it to our children as well.**

### Training our young people:

Today we have a major focus on the “evil” of smoking which is not even mentioned in the Bible. Now we don’t want to raise another generation of chain smokers so health concerns have a proper place in the training of our children, but think about how obsessed our society has become with the issue: You can even get an “R” rating in a movie!

On the other hand we cannot even mention the sin of fornication... Today it is love, or youthful passions, or just those hormones raging.

- Sexual purity is something that the Bible DOES major on and all we do is make fun of it and then excuse all sorts of sexual sins

Selling cigarettes to anyone under 18 years of age today is a crime...

At the same time American largest provider of abortions Planned Parenthood, is invited into the classroom to teach our young people that fornication is natural, how everyone is doing it and to pass out condoms to keep them “safe!”

We fear smoking which at its worst might kill your prematurely, but we encourage what the Bible says will keep people out of the Kingdom of God, again putting them at risk of hell fire!

### And finally, our society’s priorities:

In the age of the nanny state we see thousands of laws passed every year to keep us “safe.” Many passed with that famous line, “if it saves just one life.”

- Our fears are focused on physical death so we allow more and more such laws to be passed...

Just think of the ones that apply to the automobile alone: Car seats, airbags, seatbelts, where your dog can ride, when you can answer you phone and on and on

Many of these might be well and good, but contrast that with what our state supreme court did this week in throwing out the Biblical definition of marriage: In the name of tolerance!

- If I demand that the state bless my deviant sexual behavior which is proven to be more dangerous than just about anything else I can do, the court says that I have a constitutional right to do so!
- If I want to drive down the road with my seat belt unbuckled, I will get a ticket!

I could go on, but allow me to close here with some reminders to our young people, our young couples and all of us about what the Apostle Paul says about the importance of marriage... This is not merely a political issue.

- This battle goes to the heart of what we celebrate on Trinity Sunday and we must be prepared to give a Biblical response

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give His disciples the words to say when they were persecuted: That can apply to someone like Stephen who gave a great sermon when the religious leaders came after him and it can be true for us today as our courts and the media attack God's institution of marriage.

What might God give us to say: First we should remind them of what Luke taught us today: "Fear Him who after he has killed you can cast your body into hell."

- Their argument is not ultimately with us, but with God Himself!

Second, we must remember that marriage is a creation ordinance that cannot be changed and is used by God to demonstrate His great love for His people: Paul explains this in Ephesians chapter five where he shows how the fear of God we have talked about today works itself out in our everyday lives:

Ephesians 5:16: "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."

- Paul then shows how this proper fear of the one true God is worked out in our lives, beginning with marriage:

22 "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

- **There will be a lot of discussion about marriage in our state between now and November:**

**We must understand as we proclaim the wonder of our Great Triune God on this Trinity Sunday, that at bottom this is an attack on Him and His Church!**

**In response:**

- **We must pray that God enable US to show forth His character & His nature in OUR marriages before a watching world**
- **We must learn to believe the promise that Jesus gave to His disciples for such times, “The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”**

**Communion Meditation:**

**Luke 12:6 “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.**

**8 “Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.**

**10 And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.**