

# Lord and Messiah

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Trinity Sunday; God: Trinity; Messiah / Acts 2:22–36

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- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

When we talk about the Holy Trinity, it's usually to emphasize the distinctive roles of the three persons that comprise the one true God. We think of the Father primarily in terms of his work of creating and sustaining the world. This is what we confess in the Small Catechism when we say: "I believe that God made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them." Good, solid theology. We think of the Son primarily in terms of his work in saving us from our sins and restoring us to a proper relationship with God. This is what we confess also in the Small Catechism: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil." And then we think of the Holy Spirit primarily in terms of His work in bringing us to faith through the Word and Sacraments and strengthening and keeping us in that faith. This is what we confess in the Small Catechism when we say, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and kept me in the true faith."

There's certainly nothing wrong with thinking this way; it's both biblical and true. However, it's also interesting to note the way the Bible emphasizes what the three persons of the Trinity do *together* as the one true God. This is the perspective Peter has in mind as he speaks to the crowd that gathered to see what was going on when God poured out the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers on

the day of Pentecost. Peter's Pentecost sermon is perhaps surprising in that it's not really about the Holy Spirit. It's about Jesus. But that makes it a most appropriate text for this first Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, because in preaching Jesus, Peter shows us how God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Work Together to bring about our salvation.

Our text begins with Peter emphasizing the absolutely foundation fact that God raised Jesus from the dead. As we read the text, we are struck by the fact that Peter does not feel the need to argue for the resurrection of Jesus. He tells it how it is. He simply states it is as fact whose truth can be confirmed by witnesses. He expects that his audience will know and accept Jesus' resurrection as a fact. His point, then, is not to establish the fact of the resurrection, but to explain it's significance.

Another portion of Peter's Pentecost Sermon points to Psalm 16 to show that David foresaw the resurrection of Jesus and understood its significance. David recognized that his Lord and Messiah Jesus was beside him. Therefore, his faith would not be shaken by all the hardships that he was encountering in life. David expressed his joy because of his confidence in Christ and hope in the certainty that God would not abandon Jesus. He knew that Jesus' death would take away the sin that separated David and all people from God, so if God did not abandon Jesus, and if he had been joined to Jesus as we are in Baptism, God would not abandon him either. David declared his certainty that in Jesus God would reveal to him the "paths of life" by which God would lead him to eternal joy in God's presence.

Peter then reminds his hearers that David was a prophet and that he had received a promise from God that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever. Thus, "he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ." And this Messiah is Jesus. The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father is evidence of God's approval of Jesus, whom some of them had crucified and killed.

Only then does Peter return to the meaning of Pentecost, which, again, is not ultimately about the Holy Spirit, but rather about how the Holy Trinity works together for our salvation. And that, our salvation, happens because God has made Jesus both Lord and Messiah.

Peter's sermon showed the people of his day what Pentecost meant for them. The fact that the Pentecost crowd had themselves seen the fulfillment of God's promise to pour out his Holy Spirit on his people in the age of the Messiah is God's proof to them that God had made Jesus to be both Lord and Christ (Messiah). And that meant they had all the blessings David had proclaimed in Psalm 16.

But what does it mean for us to know that Jesus is Lord and Messiah? The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost means the same thing for you and for me that it meant for David and Peter.

It means that we can recognize that since our Lord and Messiah, Jesus, is beside us, our faith need not be shaken by all the hardships that we encounter in this life. Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we know the hardships that we have encountered in the past, specifically in the past three months. We have been isolated and physically distanced from one another. We may have begun to feel lonely. Yet, we are given a great promise in our Gospel reading... Our Lord and Messiah promises "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Disease, disability and death plague all of us. These are still very real hardships even in the age of Covid-19. Yet, your Lord and Messiah takes care of them. He defeated death and everything that goes along with it on the Cross and out of the Empty tomb.

Over the last almost two weeks we have turned on the TV or Computer and have seen Violent Riots, looting, burning, hurting, and killing. This may cause you some more anxiety and fear on top of the Covid anxiety and fear. Even with this the Lord and Messiah tells, "Take heart, I have overcome the world." He also through the Psalmist proclaims, "God is our refuge and strength a very help in time of trouble." You also heard from the Apostle Peter not that long ago, "Cast your anxieties on the Lord for he cares for you."

Amongst the many hardships that you have in this life, Christ as your Lord and Messiah is with you, he is beside you. And with him, your faith will not be shaken. He is your rock, your fortress, your shield. He is your Savior who promises perfect peace and perfect health when he comes again in glory.

This means that we can experience joy and hope because of our confidence in God's Messiah and our certainty that God will not abandon us. Jesus' death on the cross has reconciled us to God by forgiving the sin that separated us. Now, since we have been joined to Jesus in Baptism and God did not abandon him, we know he will not leave us in death - temporal or eternal. Since we have been joined to Jesus in Baptism...we not only have been joined to him in death, but also in resurrection.

This means that we can know that in Jesus, God has revealed to us the "Paths of life." Jesus' death and resurrection is the path by which God will lead us to eternal joy in his presence.

On this Festival of the Holy Trinity, God's Word reminds us that, while we often emphasize the distinctive roles of the three persons of the Trinity that comprise one true God, it is wonderfully true, as Peter reminds us, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together to accomplish their common will: OUR SALVATION.

IN Jesus Name. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard you hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.