

"Jesus, the Everlasting God!" - John 8:48-59

Today we celebrate Trinity Sunday, and our meditation is from the Gospel of John 8:48-59, which say: <sup>48</sup> **The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"** <sup>49</sup> **Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me.** <sup>50</sup> **Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.** <sup>51</sup> **Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."** <sup>52</sup> **The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.'** <sup>53</sup> **Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?"** <sup>54</sup> **Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'** <sup>55</sup> **But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.** <sup>56</sup> **Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad."** <sup>57</sup> **So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"** <sup>58</sup> **Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."** <sup>59</sup> **So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple."** Here ends the text for meditation. "Grace and peace to you from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who has brought us together". Amen

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Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

Allow me to tell you a couple stories about people who had done the impossible. First, I will speak about "Dashrath Manjhi who lived from 1934 to 2007. "He was born into a poor labourer family in Gahlour village in India. He is also known as Mountain Man. Dashrath Manjhi's wife, Falguni Devi, died due to lack of medical treatment because the nearest town with a doctor was 70 kilometres away from their village in Bihar, India. Dashrath did not want anyone else to suffer the same fate as his wife, so he carved a 110 m through-cut, 25-foot-deep in places and 30-foot-wide to form a road through a mountain in the Gehlour hills, working day and night for 22 years from 1960 to 1982. His work reduced the distance between the Atri and Wazirganj blocks of the Gaya district from 55 km to 15 km, bringing him national acclaim. He died on August 17, 2007. He was given a state funeral by the Government of Bihar."

Second, there is a Chinese "man named Liu Wei. "When he was 10 years old, he touched a wire and was electrocuted. He spent 45 days in the hospital and his arms had to be amputated. Liu's parents insisted he learn to feed himself without arms so he could be independent. He became adept at using his feet, and at age 18 began to learn piano. Now 23, Liu performed on the TV series *China's Got Talent* this past summer and brought the crowd to tears with his performance, playing the piano with his toes."

Friends, I have told you two stories of people who have done the impossible, and you may say "Whaaaaat? That cannot be true!" But it is true. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus' adversaries are at it again. They, by now, are publicly opposing Him even saying that Jesus is possessed by a demon. And, as you heard, at the end of this encounter, Jesus upset them more when He told the Jews: "anyone who keeps My word will never taste death." The Jews were very upset.

But Jesus did not stop. He kept going. He was speaking the truth and the Jews needed to hear it at this moment. He further told them: "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see My day. He saw it and was glad!" Incredulous the Jews got the point that Jesus was making but they refused to believe it. In a sense they repeated the now familiar words: "Whaaaaat? That cannot be true!" Jesus was saying that Abraham who had lived thousands of years before any of them, had been looking forward to Jesus' coming among God's people. In disbelief, the Jews taunted Jesus: "You are not yet 50 years old and have You seen Abraham?" But Jesus continued: "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am!"

Those words especially the last two really pushed their button. For with those words "I Am" Jesus is saying that He is the great "I Am" who Moses encountered on the mountain. "I Am" was the name that God told Moses to use when he would tell Pharaoh who was demanding that he release the Israelites to return to their homeland.

You see Jesus was not using bad grammar. When Moses asked God to tell him His name, [Exodus3:14] God said

to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" With the words, "I AM," Jesus is identifying Himself as the person who appeared to Moses from the burning bush. He is saying that although He has a human body that is less than fifty years old, His person is independent of the beginning of time. He is saying He is the one who Is, who Was, and Who always will Be. His enemies obviously understood His meaning because they were ready to kill Him for blasphemy. "I Am" was a clear, unmistakable expression that referred to the almighty God and every Jew knew it!

And so, with those words, Jesus told the Jews the truth they were in the presence of the eternal, almighty God, Himself! But rather than covering in their anger, they picked up stones intending to kill Jesus on the spot. But suddenly in still another miracle Jesus vanished. We are told that He simply "went out of the temple." Even with evidence all around them, the Jews were still saying: "That cannot be true!"

Today, we, along with the whole Christian Church, are observing Holy Trinity Sunday. And on this day, we are considering the doctrine that the only true God reveals Himself in a concept that although it is impossible to completely understand that He reveals Himself as three Persons in one Godhead - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And, just as it was in Jesus' encounter with the Jews so it is today. The truth of God who He is and how He works among His people the truth of God strikes disbelief among so many in our world. But yet the truth is the truth whether it is believed or not!

The Jews wanted the Messiah to appear as a warrior-king not as someone who said that His kingdom was not even of this world. It was because of all this, that they rejected Jesus and even hated Him. But Jesus is the second Person of the Holy Trinity. He came to earth in bodily form taking on human flesh in the womb of Mary. In other words, Jesus is love incarnated in the flesh. It is through Jesus that we see the love of God, the Father for us in action; Jesus having entered our world specifically to redeem us from our sins dying and rising three days later. And it is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth so that we might know God correctly.

But with all that said, the important thing is to not necessarily understand how God can be all three Persons of the Godhead at once. No. The important thing is for us to meet Him as He reveals Himself to us as our Father, our Savior, and our Helper who leads us down the right path helping us in every need. In faith we simply take Him at His word believing that what He says about Himself is the truth whether we fully comprehend it or not.

Oh yeah at times we are like the Jews angry at Jesus for not being our personal vending machine of favors. At times we are like the Jews not really believing that the great "I Am" still comes among us calling us to lead our lives according to His word and not according to our whims, sinful desires, evil and lusts. Where that is,,,,, so repent, and with your God-given faith believe that Your Triune God has not only created you but He has also redeemed you by the blood of the Son on the cross and then leads you to believe the seemingly impossible; that is that through the great "I Am" you are saved you are forgiven!

Yes, the great 'I Am' is the One who forgives our sins. In Luke 4:20 Jesus forgives the sin of a paralytic man. Here some men lowered that paralyzed man through a roof, Jesus said, "Man, your sins are forgiven." Now we are so used to the idea that Jesus forgives sins that we might not notice that Jesus is also saying He is God, but His enemies will not let us forget this. Immediately the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" The scribes and Pharisees remind us that when Jesus claims the authority to forgive sins, He is saying He is God.

Even people who do not now believe that Jesus is God have forgiveness set aside for them. It is on lay-away waiting for the day when the Holy Spirit brings their spirits to life and works faith in them. Then they too will experience the love of the Triune God. They too will look forward to the day when they see God face to face in heaven. Those who reject faith and forgiveness until the day they die will never experience the sweet forgiveness that the Son of God has set aside for them. The forgiveness, life, and salvation that Jesus Christ has already earned for them will remain unused. Instead, they will experience the full, dreadful consequences that they earned with their own sins. They will spend eternity paying for those sins in hell, for they will have rejected the only gift that can save them.

Why is it so important that we understand that Jesus is God on this Trinity Sunday? If Jesus is not God, then He would be a cult leader who started a false religion that has deceived billions of people. If Jesus is not God, we who gather here would be the most pathetic of people, for we would look forward to a salvation that is not there. But Jesus is God. He is the second person of the Trinity who is also human, born of the Virgin Mary. He saved us from sin with His perfect life, and His sacrificial death. He promises us a new life with his resurrection and ascension. One day we shall all see Him face to face and those of us who believe will live with Him forever. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and savior of the world.

Friends, in this text for meditation there really were not any profound comments to be heard especially when you consider that the complex doctrine of the Holy Trinity is being discussed. But yet maybe that's the way that it ought to be for ultimately we take on faith that what is revealed to us in Scripture is the truth and that it is all written so that we "will never see death." We take it on faith that the great "I Am" declares "You are His." He says: "Because I continue to love you, you are saved. You are My precious possession forever!" And yes some will say: Whaaaaat? That cannot be true!" But, it is true. It is indeed, a reality! So rejoice. Amen

May the peace of God, which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

