

## Text— Matthew 28:18-20

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Today is Trinity Sunday, and consequently we especially take note of the fact that the one true God is the Triune God, three distinct coequal and coeternal Persons, and yet one divine essence. In the opening verses of the Holy Bible, Genesis 1:1-3, we read, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” Hence, we are informed of God creating, the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, and the Word of God being spoken and thereby creating light. Accordingly, in those first few verses of Holy Scripture we see the Triune God in action creating, for Psalm 33:6 also reports, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”— The original Hebrew wording indicates “breath” also means “Spirit.” Furthermore, we read in John 1:1-3 & 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” So, Jesus Christ – God the Son – is Creator as God the Father is Creator and God the Holy Ghost is Creator. Thus, the Triune God is the one true God, for 1 John 5:7 clearly states, “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

Oh, we human beings cannot comprehend the mystery of the Holy Trinity with our finite minds, but by God’s grace we accept it as fact since He has revealed Himself to us as Triune in His holy Word, and, He has graciously gifted us Christians with the faith we have in Him.

Our Scripture selection is a familiar portion of God’s Word which teaches us of the Holy Trinity while informing us in regards to:

### “THE GREAT MISSION COMMISSION”

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Who gave the great mission commission and why it is authoritative
- 2) To whom the great mission commission is given and what it consists of

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Verse 18, ----- (Matthew 28:18)

That which is recorded in our Scripture selection took place after Jesus’ bodily resurrection and before His visible ascension, for just prior to our text we read, “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.” (Matthew 28:16-17) Yeah, the twelve had become the eleven because Judas Iscariot who had betrayed the Lord failed to repent of his sin, but “went and hanged himself.” (Matthew 27:5) Additionally, it’s sad that when Jesus visibly appeared before the eleven some doubted. Thankfully, those among the eleven who first doubted subsequently ceased their doubting.

It was while the eleven were in Galilee on a mountain that *Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Thus, we note that Jesus has full authority to issue any commands He desires since ALL POWER is given unto Him in heaven and in earth. Take it to heart that Jesus was GIVEN all power in heaven and earth by God the Father according to Jesus’ human nature, for according to Jesus’ divine nature He always had all power. Nevertheless, Jesus had laid aside the full and constant use of His power while in His state of humiliation as He was completing His mission of mercy, our redemption,

for Philippians 2:6-8 informs us that Christ Jesus is He, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” However, because Jesus successfully completed His atoning work, Philippians 2:9-11 relates, “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Accordingly, Jesus, as both true God and true man but one Christ, possesses and uses ALL power in heaven and in earth, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Colossians 2:9) Hence, Jesus Christ gave the great mission commission which follows in our text. The great mission commission is definitely authoritative since the Lord Jesus Christ surely has the divine power to give it.

It behooves us to also keep in mind that the great mission commission which is recorded in the remaining verses of our text is also backed by the divine authority of God the Father and God the Holy Ghost as well, since they together with God the Son – Jesus Christ – are but the one true God. Thus, the great mission commission is indeed authoritative since it was issued by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see to whom the great mission commission is given and what it consists of.

Verses 19 & 20, ----- (Matthew 28:19-20)

It is Jesus Christ the God/man who with full divine power and authority commanded His disciples, His followers, saying: *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,*

*and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Yes, the great mission commission given by Jesus Christ was to His disciples, His followers, unto the end of the world. Hence, it is Christ’s Church – the Holy Christian Church, all true believers in Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord – to whom the great mission commission is given to carry out until this world no longer exists. Luke 24:46-49 reports it was to Jesus’ disciples that He also said, “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

So, the disciples of our Lord took up the mission work in earnest after the day of Pentecost had fully come, for Acts 1:8 relates that Jesus had promised them, saying, “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Think about it. Jesus’ apostles together with the evangelists penned the New Testament Holy Scriptures as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and subsequently, those Words of God have been preached and taught by those called from among the Holy Christian Church to do so, and that practice will continue until the Lord Jesus visibly returns in glory at the end of days, for 2 Peter 3:10 clearly states, “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” Indeed, the sin-sick world in which we live will come to an end; but, until that time, God’s Word – Law and Gospel – will be preached and taught among all nations, all peoples.

All people need to hear Law and Gospel, sin and grace, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin,” declares Romans 3:20. And, we learn in Romans 1:16-17, “the gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Thus, Law and Gospel preaching and teaching is vital, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1 Corinthians 1:21)

Looking again at our sermon text, observe that the great mission commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ is His command to His followers to go *and teach all nations*. ALL nations, ALL people – both young and old, from babies to adults – are to be taught by Christ’s followers. Note that the method of teaching all nations is specified by the Lord Jesus in the following words of our text: *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*. Thus, it is by baptizing ALL nations, ALL peoples, and then teaching them ALL of Jesus’ doctrines – Law and Gospel – that the Savior adds to His Church.

Consider the fact that baptism is commanded by Christ Jesus, for that fact certainly indicates baptism should be highly valued. The original Greek wording clearly defines baptism as the application of water by washing, sprinkling, or immersing. But, let us especially note that the water is to be applied to individuals of all nations in the NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST— that’s NAME singular, and yet three distinct divine Persons are mentioned: the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST. Thus, the waters of Holy Baptism are connected with the Word of God as an individual is thereby baptized into the Triune God, the one true God.

Regarding the efficacy of Holy Baptism, we read in Ephesians 5:25-27, “Christ also loved the church,

and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” And, Galatians 3:26-27 reports, “ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 12:13 informs us, “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

Thus, Holy Baptism, as instituted and commanded by Christ, is a means of God’s grace by which folks are gifted with faith in the true Triune God, and thereby with the forgiveness of sins and salvation, since God’s powerful Word is connected with the water in Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit working therein, for 1 Peter 3:21-22 informs us in no uncertain terms: “baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” Accordingly, Holy Baptism is certainly important and is not to be despised.

Now, some folks mistakenly think that once they are baptized they are good-to-go and need not persist in the Word of God. Nevertheless, such thinking is dead-wrong since Jesus commands in the great mission commission that those who have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost are to be taught to observe ALL THINGS Jesus commanded His apostles. Indeed, those who have been gifted with faith in the true God are to be sustained in that faith and grow in that faith by persisting in feeding on the teachings of Jesus Christ, that is, ALL the doctrines of the Holy Bible.

Christians are NOT free to live any way their sinful flesh may desire; NO, Christians are to feed on God’s Word – the Holy Scriptures – regularly, for

Jesus says in John 8:31-32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Yes, it's as we read in Psalm 1:1-6, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." So, we are to daily and sincerely repent of our sins, turning anew to Jesus in heart-deep faith; then, we are to strive to be fruitful in the faith by earnestly endeavoring to live in full accord with His Word.

Sadly, I've heard professed Christians remark that our ILC churches make too big-of-a-deal over doctrine. I tell such people that God in His Word makes much of the importance of His doctrine and therefore we had better be concerned about taking ALL the DOCTRINES of the Holy Bible seriously. Concerning the early Christians, Acts 2:42 reports, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." So, persisting in sound Scriptural doctrine is beneficial and commendable!

In Romans 16:17-18 the apostle Paul writes by inspiration of God, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." So, sound Scriptural doctrine is quite important! The apostle Paul in writing to the young pastor Timothy urged, in 1 Timothy 4:13 & 16, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Take heed unto thyself,

and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." So, sound Scriptural doctrine is quite important!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." So, sound Scriptural doctrine is quite important! Finally, 2 John 9-11 warns us all by declaring, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." So, I repeat, sound Scriptural doctrine is quite important, for Jesus has commanded His followers: *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

Realize that if we baptized Christians wish to remain in the true faith, grow in the faith, and be fruitful in the faith, we need to see that ALL things Jesus has commanded are taught and observed among us by demanding that ALL the doctrines of the Holy Bible are proclaimed to us and fed upon by us and by those we have chosen from among us to preach and teach when God has called and gifted such individuals.

Let us never forget that Jesus Christ the God/man promises us: *lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* Yes, yes, it is so that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is invisibly present with us and will remain invisibly present with us until His visible return in glory at the end of days. Oh, it's comforting for us Christians to know that Jesus is with us together with His heavenly Father and His Holy Spirit while we dwell in our sinful flesh in a sin-sick world that is growing worse each day.

We need the Triune God at all times, and we have Him with us because Jesus who cannot lie promised in John chapter 14, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:16-18, 23) Accordingly, fellow Christians, take it to heart that the true Triune God is with us, to guide us and to comfort us as we travel through life in this vale of tears. Let us therefore thank and praise God daily for all that He has done and still does for us.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us continue to trust and confide in the one true God the Triune God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost – "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Corinthians 12:3 ). Yes, let us cling to the one true God, the very God into whose name we were baptized and whose Word we regularly feed upon in accord with the great mission commission which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commanded before He visibly ascended into heaven. Amen.

m.e.l.