

5/30/2010

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Father all-powerful, Christ Lord and Savior, Spirit of Love, we praise You. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love. One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in Your image. Be close to the world Your love brings to life. We ask this, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, true and living, forever and ever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 (*The Blessings of Wisdom*)

1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.

22 "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; 23 I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. 24 When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water; 25 before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, 26 before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world.

27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 28 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 30 Then I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, 31 rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.

THE SECOND LESSON Acts 2:14a, 22-36

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(*Paul shares Old Testament readings that help show Jesus is the Promised Messiah.*)

14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: . . . 22 "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

25 David said about him: "*I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.*"

29 "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. **33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you**

now see and hear. **34** For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, *"The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 8:48-59 (*God's Son and Abraham's God*)

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. **50** I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. **51** I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. **53** Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. **55** Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. **56** Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." **57** "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" **58** "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" **59** At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

[Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.](#) **Albert Einstein,** *"Science, Philosophy and Religion: a Symposium", 1941 US (German-born) physicist (1879 - 1955)*

INTRO - I recently met a man who asked what I did. I told him I was a Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Palmer. He said, "Oh." I could see he was somewhat taken aback. Then he replied. "I'm an agnostic. It's not that I believe there is no God, I'm just not sure I can know there is a god." When I asked why he replied, "I'm a biologist, and I'm not sure how God and science can exist together." We've all met or heard of people who think this way. They understand science and scientific theory. Because God does not fit into their understanding, they just can't accept him. I pray this man comes to faith so that in the arrogance of his knowledge, he does not miss the life and love of Almighty God."

I. We find the Jews in this same situation in our Gospel lesson. They couldn't understand Jesus. So they rejected Him.

A. Look at verse 51 of today's Gospel lesson from John 8. **51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."**

1. Jesus is calling the to faith in His word and teaching, faith that He is the Lord and Messiah and Savior of the world. But, how could a man, a man they thought was from Samaria or Galilee, how could he make such outrageous and even blasphemous claims.

52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

2. At this question, Jesus shared with them even more of the blessing that He was Lord and Messiah, and the God was there with them. **58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"**

3. Do you see their response? **59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.** They couldn't understand the mystery of Jesus, so they rejected Him, to their own loss. Sounds like the man I met.

B. There are many ways God is beyond our understanding.

1. At times we read something in the Bible about God that is beyond our understanding.
2. At times life brings tragedy, or discoveries, that seem to contradict what we have heard about a loving, all-powerful God.
3. So in those moments of lack of understanding, or those moments of tragedy, have you ever been tempted to reject God because *He* doesn't fit into *your* boxes??

II. Today is Trinity Sunday, the day the church has set aside to remember the majesty and mystery of God. Some people have trouble believing in one God. Imagine trying to understand or believe in the Lord of all, who is one God, but 3 persons; who is all powerful, but became a man, who is the God of life, but who died and rose, who is holy and punishes sin, but who is merciful and died to pay for the sin of the whole world. God is beyond our ability to understand.

A. Jesus is all that He told the Jews in our story.

1. He is God himself, who knew Abraham, and existed before Him, so that Jesus could say, **"Before Abraham was, I AM."**
2. Yet, Jesus is also the man who was standing before these people, who would die for

their sin and rise again.

3. The person of Jesus, which we confess in the creed, taken from the Bible is a mystery.

B. The person of the Lord of all, one God and Three persons, Creator, Savior, Comforter and Counselor, is even a greater mystery. No wonder Isaiah said in chapter 55, 8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

1. But, do you want a God who is small enough for you to understand?

2. No wonder the church celebrates the fact of God's majesty and mystery, that the one God and 3 persons is beyond our ability to understand, but we believe and respond with lives of faithful obedience.

III. Have you had car troubles lately? In November, on the way to visit someone in the hospital, my car broke down. Now, I used to fix my old Volkswagen. I would tune it up, adjust the valves, replace the heater cable, and even change the clutch. But today with all the computers cars are beyond my mechanical knowledge. But think about it, just because I don't understand them, doesn't mean I don't drive them. I had the car towed to a mechanic, who had studied, and did know and helped me.

In the face of our Lord Jesus, who can say, "Before Abraham was, I am," and in the face of the mystery of the Lord of all who is 3 persons and one God, our best response is awe and humility and faith.

A. Paul quotes Job in Romans 11,

1. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

2. You see, in awe Paul confesses the majesty of God, and then praises Him. In the face of the mystery of Almighty God, we owe him worship and praise.

B. In 1 Peter 5 Peter calls for humility, when life is beyond our understanding.

1. 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

2. But then he comforts us that the all powerful Lord of the universe loves us. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

C. In our lesson for today, when confronted with the mystery of God, we are told of the Jews, 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

1. Instead of rejection, faith and obedience are a proper way for us to act.

2. You take your car to the mechanic, don't you? (Unless you are one - and then you take your computer to the shop.)

3. Because God is wiser than we are we can trust His love, and even when we don't know why, because He is God we obey His commandments.

CONCLUSION - One of greatest scientists of the last century was a man whose name you know, Albert Einstein. You might think a great scientist would reject God. Do you know what Einstein said? *Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.* On this Trinity Sunday, as we are confronted by our smallness and sin in the face of the Almighty and merciful God, three persons in one God, in humility we say, Thank you Lord. In faith we follow and obey. Amen.