

Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1–2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11–13; Matthew 28:16–20

Opener:

Friends, please open your Bibles to **Matthew 28:16–20**. If you do not have a Bible with you, there should be a pew Bible in front of you.

Today is Trinity Sunday; this is not simply a day when the Church says, “Here are the doctrines we believe.” Trinity Sunday says, “**Here is the God who gives shape to creation, redemption, holiness, community, and mission.**”

So today, we are not looking at an abstract idea. **We are beholding the living God who creates, restores, indwells, and sends.**

Reading Matthew 28:16 - 20.

These are the words of God for the people of God (**Praise be to God**) ...

Introduction

There is a difference between a crowd and a people.

A crowd can gather in the same room and still have no shared life. A crowd can sit in the same bleachers, wait in the same lobby, stand in the same checkout line, or even occupy the same sanctuary. A crowd shares space.

The difference is this: a crowd shares space, but a people share a center. A people have a story. They have a belonging, a way of life, and they are formed by something deeper than preference, convenience, mood, anxiety, or agreement.

This is why we talk about things like Trinity Sunday, because this does not merely give us a doctrine to explain. This reveals the God who makes us a people.

Last week, on Pentecost, we named something important: **Spirit-filled witness is love that shows up before it is convenient.**

That line seemed to land because we know how often love waits for better timing. Better energy. Better circumstances. Better people.

But today takes us one layer deeper. We not only ask, “Will you love when it is inconvenient?”

Today asks, “Where does that kind of love come from?” And the answer is not guilt, nor is the answer church pressure or nostalgia. The answer is God.

The Church exists because it is made by the living God.

- The Father creates.
- The Son restores.
- The Spirit fills and forms.

Take Away: God Creates Us for Communion

God creates us for communion... It all begins with God. Not with human achievement, human anxiety, or human productivity...

But with God: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, NIV).

- Before there is work, there is gift.
- Before there is human responsibility, there is divine goodness.
- Before anyone produces anything, God speaks creation into being.

Then God says something remarkable: “*Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26, NIV). Do you understand what this means? We are made in the image of God, right? That means before we are useful, we are loved. Before we are productive, we have dignity. Before we are successful, we are called.

Psalm 8 looks at the sky, the moon, the stars, and the smallness of human life, and asks, “*What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*” (Psalm 8:4, NIV). That is a holy question... Because creation reminds us of two things at once: we are small, and we are treasured.

- We are dust, but we are beloved dust.
- We are creatures, but we are image-bearing creatures.
- We are not God, but we are made to reflect God.

God does not merely gather a crowd. God makes a people.

And that is beautiful. That is good. That is the gift of creation.

But Scripture is honest, and so are we.

The communion God creates is the very communion sin fractures.

So when we say humanity was made for communion with God, communion with one another, and faithful stewardship within creation, we are also naming the ache we all know. We were made for communion, but we do not always live in communion. We were made for holy love, but our love gets tangled in fear, pride, resentment, and exhaustion.

Take Away: Christ Restores What Sin Has Fractured

That is why the next movement of the sermon matters:

Christ restores what sin has fractured.

Because we know the world does not stay whole:

- We know what fractured communion feels like.
- We know what it is to be near people physically and far from them relationally.
- We know what it is to sit in the same room and still feel divided.
- We know what it is to love people and still react to them.
- We know what it is to want peace and still carry resentment.
- We know what it is to want holiness and still be pulled by old patterns.

That is why the Gospel of God matters.

- The Gospel is not advice.
- The Gospel is not a religious improvement plan.
- The Gospel is not God saying, “Try harder and maybe you can become acceptable.”

The Gospel is God’s restoring work in Jesus Christ.

- In Jesus, God comes to restore what sin has fractured.
- In Jesus, God comes to forgive, cleanse, reconcile, and reign.
- In Jesus, God does not abandon creation. God enters it.

Apostle John writes, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14, NIV).

And John the Baptist says, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29, NIV).

Do you know what is happening; this is restoration. It is not vague spirituality or positive thinking or some vague religious nostalgia.

This is the Gospel of God: Christ takes away sin. He restores communion. Jesus speaks to the human condition.

This is where our Friends’ story helps us: Early Friends were not trying merely to build a religious organization. The first generations of Friends understood their calling as a recovery of “Basic Christianity” or “Primitive Christianity Revived,” seeking to be Friends of Jesus who knew and carried out his will. **William Penn wrote** about this as a Christian addressing other Christians in the mid-1690s. That matters. Because Primitive Christianity is not about pretending we can go backward and recreate the exact circumstances of the early church.

- It is not religious reenactment.
- It is not nostalgia dressed up as faithfulness.

This is about returning to the basic teachings of the Gospel, it means returning to the living Center. We are not called to recreate Acts 2 by going backward. We are called to return to the living Center who made Acts 2 possible in the first place.

This is all possible because The Church is made by the living God: The Father creates. The Son restores. And the Spirit fills and forms...

That is why George Fox's word still speaks as truth. Fox was not searching for a church brand. He was searching for the living Christ. He heard that there was one, even Christ Jesus, who could speak to his condition.

That is the Friends faith walk at its best: Christ present, Christ speaking, Christ restoring, Christ gathering a people. And people, that is still what we need:

- We do not need a museum version of the Church.
- We need the living Christ.
- We need the One who can speak to our condition.
- We need the One who restores what sin has fractured.

God does not merely gather a crowd. God makes a people.

Take Away: The Spirit Forms Holy Community

Now listen to the shape of holy community in 2 Corinthians 13:7-13. Turn those bibles to...

Did you hear what Paul writes, he says, "*Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace*" (2 Corinthians 13:11, NIV).

That is not sentimental togetherness. That is Spirit-formed community, it is:

- Restoration.
- Encouragement.
- Shared mind.
- Peace.

Then Paul gives one of the most beautiful Trinitarian blessings in Scripture: "*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*" (2 Corinthians 13:14, NIV).

Grace. Love. Fellowship.

This is the inner shape of the Church.

- The grace of Jesus restores us.
- The love of God grounds us.
- The fellowship of the Holy Spirit binds us together.

So, the Church is not merely an organization. The Church is not merely a weekly gathering. The Church is not merely people with similar religious preferences sitting near each other.

The Church is a Spirit-indwelt people. And this is where holiness must be protected from becoming self-improvement.

Because life in Jesus is not self-improvement. Holiness is life in Christ, by the Spirit, forming a people who live in faithful obedience, inward surrender, outward witness, and holy love. **Hear this**, that means **holiness** is not God handing us a heavier burden.

It is Jesus Christ sharing his life with us by the Spirit. So when Paul says, “be restored,” he is not saying, “Try harder to become nicer religious people.”

He is saying, “Let the grace of Jesus put you back together.”

When Paul says, “encourage one another,” he is not saying, “Pretend everything is fine.” He is saying, “Become the kind of people whose words strengthen faith instead of spreading fear.”

When Paul says, “live in peace,” he is not saying, “Avoid everything difficult.” He is saying, “Let the God of love and peace shape your life together.”

This is deeply practical.

In anxious families, anxious churches, and anxious communities, people often look for someone to blame, someone to rescue, someone to fix it, someone to carry the emotional weight for everyone else.

But the Spirit forms a different kind of people:

- The Spirit forms people who can tell the truth in love.
- The Spirit forms people who can stay connected without being ruled by anxiety.
- The Spirit forms people who can forgive without pretending harm does not matter.
- The Spirit forms people who can love before it is convenient because their love is rooted in God, not in mood.

Paul Anderson, a theologian and professor at George Fox University says the healing and saving power of God’s presence runs through Scripture, and that God’s presence does not only give us new possibilities for God’s work in the world; God begins to use us as active means of that work.

God does not merely gather a crowd. God makes a people.

Take Away: Christ Sends Us in His Presence

Matthew 28 brings all of this together.

The disciples come to the mountain. They see the risen Jesus. They worship.

And Matthew says something very honest: “*When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted*” (Matthew 28:17, NIV).

I am grateful Matthew tells us that... Jesus does not wait until every disciple has everything emotionally sorted out before he gives them a mission.

He gathers their strengths and weaknesses together, and into that mixed group, Jesus says, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:18-19, NIV).

And he tells them to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, NIV).

- The Church is not sent in its own name.
- The Church is not sent in the name of survival, nor is it sent in the name of preference.
- The Church is sent in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And Jesus says, “*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20, NIV).

That promise is everything. And this is our mission: we witness the Kingdom by proclaiming the gospel and embodying The Way of Jesus Christ.

We do this because proclaiming and embodying belong together:

- We speak the Gospel.
- We live the Gospel.
- We announce Christ.
- We obey Christ.
- We invite people to Jesus.

That is why holiness and mission cannot be separated. God creates us for communion, restores us through His Gospel, and sends us in Christ’s presence as a holy, Spirit-formed people.

Genesis says we are created by God for image-bearing communion.

Psalms 8 says we are small, treasured, and entrusted with creation.

2 Corinthians says the Church is shaped by grace, love, fellowship, restoration, encouragement, and peace.

Matthew 28 says the risen Jesus sends us in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and promises his abiding presence.

So, Trinity Sunday says: Here is the living God who creates, restores, indwells, and sends.

Conclusion

So, Friends, what does this mean for us? It means we are not merely trying to keep religious activity alive. It means we are not simply preserving memories. It means we are not called to become an anxious crowd sharing space while trying to hold everything together.

We are called to return to the living Center. Christ speaks to our condition.

He restores what sin has fractured. He gathers us into communion.

Jesus pours out the Spirit and He sends us into the world. And this is His promise, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20, NIV).

So yes, love will still be inconvenient. But it is not rootless. It is not random. It is not something we manufacture from spiritual exhaustion.

Holy love flows from the life of God. And together, God makes us a people who make Christ visible in the world.

Not a crowd.

A people.

Not survival.

Mission.

Because the holy God who lives as Father, Son, and Spirit creates us for communion, restores us through the Gospel, and sends us as a holy people who make Christ visible in the world.

Amen.

Working Footnotes

1. Paul N. Anderson, “Primitive Christianity Revived—The Original Quaker Vision,” *Quaker Religious Thought* 131 (2018): 5–6.
2. Paul N. Anderson, “A Theology of Presence,” *Evangelical Friend* 26, no. 6 (July/August 1993): 4.
3. Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Church Publishing, 2007), especially his discussion of presence, self-differentiation, and leadership in anxious systems.
4. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), especially his treatment of resurrection-shaped mission and the Church’s present participation in God’s future.