

Service Theme: *God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity*

Sermon Theme: *Too Inconceivable to Ignore*

(June 4, 2023—Holy Trinity Sunday) *Isaiah 6:1-8*

God tells us some pretty inconceivable things about himself in the Bible; mysteries we can't comprehend. Which makes me wonder, which would you say is the most inconceivable thing God tells us about himself? I'll give you three options: Is it what we're celebrating today, **A.) The Triune God**--that God is three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and yet, just one God? Or maybe **B.) The Dual Nature of Christ**, that Jesus isn't half God/half man, or just God, or just a man, but is 100% God and 100% man, simultaneously? Or maybe it's another thing we'll celebrate this morning, **C.) The Real Presence in the Lord's Supper**—that Jesus' true body and blood are really present along with the bread and wine in Holy Communion?

Whichever answer you chose, I'd argue that you're wrong. There's something about God even more inconceivable. Yes, it's not really fair that I didn't give you the correct answer as an option, but it's my sermon, so I can do what I want! 😊 That's not to say those options I gave you aren't inconceivable. There's just something even more inconceivable about God. I'll explain what that is a little later. For now, on Holy Trinity Sunday, let's talk more about the Triune God!

If you read your Bible cover to cover, do you know how many times you'd find the word "Trinity" or "Triune?" Zero. That's because the terms "Trinity" and "Triune" were created by the church. But that doesn't mean they're not biblical, because they absolutely describe what God does tell us about himself in the Bible--that he is a "three-in-one" God. Tri—three. Un—one.

Scripture clearly teaches that there is only one God. Not three Gods, or a thousand gods. One. God taught the Israelites, and Jesus reiterated, ***"Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one."*** And through

Isaiah, God exclaimed, ***"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God."***

Yet, in the same breath, Scripture names three distinct, separate persons when referring to God. Jesus commanded us to baptize ***"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*** Notice he said ***"name,"*** not ***"names!"*** And at Jesus' baptism, all three persons of the Trinity were present. God the Father speaks from Heaven about Jesus, ***"This is my Son whom I love,"*** while God the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove. That's why at Creation, God, speaking to himself says, ***"Let us make man in our image."***

So we call God "triune" or a "trinity," because God tells us throughout Scripture that he's a three-in-one God. One God, not three gods. Yet, three distinct and separate persons within the Godhead—each one equal to the others in power, glory, and value. Each of them eternal, not created, existing without beginning or end. Each person is fully and completely God, not a third, or part or portion of God.

The astute mathematician or scientist quickly chimes in, "That makes no sense!" "That's impossible!" "100% + 100% + 100% doesn't equal 100%!" And it's true. The doctrine of the Trinity is absolutely inconceivable for us to wrap our minds around, and absolutely impossible to explain in a rational, reasonable, logical way. In fact, whenever people come up with logical illustrations or reasonable explanations to make the Trinity understandable to our human brains, we shortchange the truth of the Trinity, and teach falsehood that God never said.

For many people, that's a dealbreaker. They won't believe in a triune God, because they refuse to believe anything that doesn't make sense to them, or that can't be proven by scientific evidence. Many write the Trinity off as some fantasy fairytale concocted by people who just wanted a God to believe in. But this morning, I want to show you why the inconceivable nature of the Trinity isn't a dealbreaker. Rather, it's why the Triune God is **Too Inconceivable to Ignore**.

That's the God the prophet Isaiah met face to face in our sermon text. He writes, ***"I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple."*** In this vision, Isaiah saw God himself seated in the throne room of heaven, displaying his full power and glory. And it was quite a scene! ***"Above [God] were seraphs, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'"***

With each word of their pillar-shaking praise, the angels built the levels of God's glory higher. **"Holy, Holy, Holy"**—God is so much more than "good." He's completely and utterly perfect! So holy and glorious that even the powerful, holy angels felt the need to cover their faces and feet in reverence and humility in his holy, glorious presence! That "holiness" is repeated three times to signify the complete holiness of God, but also in reference to God's Triune nature! The angels also call him **"LORD"**—declaring him the perfectly faithful God who never fails to keep his covenant promises to his people. And he's the LORD **"Almighty"**—the all-powerful God who rules over all things in heaven and earth with complete authority and superiority.

This isn't the kind of God you can feel apathetic about or respond with a "Meh." If God is that holy, powerful, and glorious, seated on the throne and judge's seat of heaven, then we can't ignore him! And the doctrine of the Trinity should have the same affect on us!

As I said before, some people refuse to believe in something they can't understand. Which is a difficult worldview to be consistent with. Most people who fly on an airplane can't explain in detail how jet propulsion or aircraft engines work. But I've never heard anyone refuse to fly because they don't understand exactly how it works. Likewise, I couldn't perform brain surgery. But if I needed brain surgery, I wouldn't tell the brain surgeon not to bother because I don't understand how it works! Not being able to understand how something works isn't usually a dealbreaker for us. Rather, we trust and are thankful for the people who are wiser and more skilled than do!

And if God exists in a nature beyond my ability to comprehend, I can trust and be thankful that God is that much greater, that much more powerful, and that far beyond mankind that we can't even begin to wrap our minds around his existence! A God that powerful, glorious, and inconceivable can't be ignored!

On top of that, who would make this up? If you wanted to invent a god that other people would believe in and worship, would you describe that god's nature in a way that makes absolutely no sense to human minds? That would be like marketing a product by telling people, "None of you will use this in your daily life!" No, a man-made god would make logical sense. To say that there is one God makes logical sense. To say there are thousands of gods who each play a specific role in keeping the world spinning, that makes some logical sense. But a three-in-one God?

Not only who would make this up, but who could make this up? No one would describe a Triune God. Unless that's who God really is, so he described himself that way in his Word. and he's just that much more glorious and powerful than us that we can't begin to comprehend him! Friends, that's a God who is too holy, glorious, powerful, and inconceivable to be ignored!

So how do we react to such a God? When Isaiah stood face to face with the holy, almighty, glorious Triune God, he cried out in utter terror, ***"Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!"***

Isaiah was terrified because he knew his sin and unworthiness. He knew that the Holy almighty God had every reason and every ability to smooch him like an ant on the sidewalk! So each word the angels sang drove the knife of terror and despair deeper into Isaiah's heart. "He's the infinitely holy God! And you're an infinitely sinful man. He's the God of perfect faithfulness! And you're a man with a pile of broken promises in your wake. He's the all-powerful God, and you're a completely powerless human. So yeah, Isaiah was terrified!

But do we act differently in God's presence? You might think, "If I was standing before God in Heaven with the angels shaking the rafters, I'd be terrified too!" But what I mean is, do we stand before God with that same kind of awe when we're in God's presence...in worship? Do we have the same kind of reverence and humility when God comes to us in his Word, and in the Lord's Supper? Or do we often approach God's presence with a half-hearted attention, and an apathetic "Meh"? Instead of living like the worship of and service to a glorious, powerful God like that is our top priority, has our faith life become an afterthought we only pay attention to when all the "more important things" in our life are out of the way?

If we truly understand how unworthy our sins make us to stand in the presence of an infinitely Holy God, and if we truly take to heart that this one true God is so powerfully and gloriously inconceivable that we can't even begin to grasp him, then we can't stand before him with apathy and boredom any more than Isaiah could stand before God in Heaven with apathy and boredom! Like Isaiah, we should live in constant fear and expectation of retribution from the Holy Triune God!

But remember at the beginning where I said there's an even more inconceivable thing about God than the three options I gave? This is where that comes into play. While Isaiah was quaking in his boots before the Holy, Triune King and Judge of all, he recounts, ***"One of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'"*** The most inconceivable thing about the Triune God is...his grace. His undeserved love! That he doesn't get rid of sin by destroying the sinner, but by removing sin from the sinner. Instead of annihilation for sin, God makes atonement for sinners!

The angel took that burning coal from the altar where the sacrifices were made for the sins of the Israelites. The sacrifices that reminded them of the ultimate sacrifice that would be made to atone for the sins of the whole world. The sacrifice made when one of the persons of the Trinity, God the Son, became the Son of Man. When God crossed the

divide and came to mankind so that he could willingly suffer the punishments of Hell and die the death earned by sinners as the perfect substitute for all! So that one day we can stand before his heavenly throne not in terror—but at perfect peace with God. That is inconceivable love and grace! But friends, that is the exact kind of love and grace the Triune God has for you, and has shown to you in Jesus!

That's why it's so necessary to believe the doctrine of the Trinity! Because if God isn't Triune, then it's impossible for Jesus to be our Savior!

So if we can believe in something so inconceivable as the Holy, all-powerful, eternal God's perfect love for sinners like us, then we can trust in all the inconceivable things God tells us about himself. And trusting in a God too inconceivable to ignore, we can hear the Triune God's question, ***"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*** and respond in faith and love like Isaiah, ***"Here am I. Send me!"***