**Simply God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

Based on [John 3:1-17](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn3)

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The Holy Trinity, The Visitation

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Welcome to the Sunday of the Holy Trinity. Today is the High Festival Day, where we set aside special time to confess the Trinity at length. The Athanasian Creed is longer than your lawn in the springtime, and that can turn some people off. Isn't God simple? After all, you don't need a Ph.D to be saved right? And yet the creed we confess today says this, "**Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally**." Now maybe you can simply not speak that part of the creed, but you are still confess it by association. Silence is compliance. You are worshipping in a church that says, unless you keep this you will perish eternally. So what are you confessing?

You are confessing the simplest doctrine in the church, the doctrine of who God is. He is three persons in one God. Is that so hard? My five-year old son and my two year old daughter can confess the Triune God. Many of you would confess that you have a computer in your home, without understanding how it works. **You have smartphones that are smarter than you, (no offense), and you just shrug it off, accept your ignorance of the seemingly magical way it works and continue to use it.** Friends, the Trinity is much simpler to understand than a smartphone. A smartphone has numerous components and circuits and sensors...many parts. God has no parts, no layers, no circuits, he is simple. he is one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You don't have to understand God before you can know him and call upon Him. You simply have to listen to His Word, confess Him before men in the same way he confesses himself, call upon Him the same way Jesus does, Praying to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit: three persons, one God, and leap for joy at what this Trinity in Unity has done for love of you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today is also the day the church observes "The Visitation", the day that Mary, who is pregnant with the Son of God, visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is herself six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Two miraculous pregnancies; two children of promise, two prophets of the Most High God…only one Saviour though, and one God. And so Luke 1:39-44 says,

**39**In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, **40**and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **41**And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, **42**and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! **43**And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44**For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

Brothers and Sisters, babies can't leap for joy upon hearing certain words, can they? Sure they can, when they hear their father's voice. And Jesus says, "**My sheep know my voice, and follow me**" (John 10:4). How can it be that a six month old preborn baby can hear Jesus voice? By the power of the one who gives all Christians faith in the first place, by the third person of the Trinity…by the Holy Spirit. **This bible passage is proof positive that the Holy Spirit doesn't need you to understand the Athanasian Creed in order to leap for joy in worshipping the Triune God it describes**. You don't even need to have been born yet, for faith is a trust and a comfort and a joy in the Word of the Lord, and that is not your own doing, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and you don't have to be a certain age before you are old enough to believe in the Triune God. Listen to the words of David in Psalm 22. He prays to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit,

**9** Yet you are he who took me from the womb;

you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.

 **10** On you was I cast from my birth,

and from my mother’s womb you have been my God (Psalm 22:9-10).

"You made me trust you at my mother's breast." Unless King David was still nursing when he reached the age of accountability, David is saying he trusted God as an infant. **And faith in God is simply to fear, love and trust Him above all things.** If a baby can hear and trust the voice of her mother, so too she can hear and trust the voice of her God and confess her God in the Spirit with groanings too deep for words (Romans 8:26). You can be certain of this, because Jesus himself in Mathew 21:16 quotes Psalm 8 which says, "**Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise**."

Brothers and sisters, your faith, your ability to fear, love and trust in God's Word above all things is not limited by your intellect, and not empowered by your ability to speak. Likewise you are not conceived in faith, but in sin (Psalm 51:5). But the fact is, the ability to trust in God given and enabled by the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead whom you have known from infancy, from the womb **when your mother who bore you heard the word of God** and the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Children hear the voice of God, even in their parents own rules who are God’s Representatives to them. **When our son Noah first began to ride his bicycle, he was taught he had to wear a helmet**. And there was no arguing, no asking why, if we forgot his helmet, he’d remember. He knew that was the command, and he trusted his parents words “you need to wear a helmet if you’re going to ride a bike.” He trusted it so much that when he’d see other kids or adults strangers riding by he’d shout to to them, “**Hey, you forgot to put your helmet on**.”

Eventually he’ll see others not wearing a helmet and not correct them, but question the wisdom of the practice. **When he’s a teenager, I’m sure he will go through a phase where wearing helmets is not cool, and cool is of course more important than safe, even if your parents told you otherwise.** That stage between childhood and adulthood, adolescence is considered stage of rebellion for good reason. Simple trust in simple authority is not as simple as it used to be. An explanation is needed.

So the Athanasian Creed is an explanation for adults, a confession for the lips of the vocally faithful. “God the Father is Almighty, God the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit Almighty, and yet there are not three Almighties but one Almighty.” By the Holy Spirit, Infants trust the God of the Athanasian Creed, The Triune God. And the Second Person of that Triune God took on Human Flesh to die for your sins, and pour upon you His Spirit. Listen to How Jesus speaks to Nicodemus in our Gospel reading. “**Truly, truly I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.”** Jesus says “we”, numbering himself with the Father and the Spirit. The same way he does when in the beginning, said to himself, “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” God is a trinity of persons in one divine substance, "whoever does not keep this whole and undefiled will without doubt, perish eternally."

But fear not, brothers and sisters. You don’t need to have the Athanasian Creed memorized to have eternal life. You simply must have faith in the God that the Athanasian Creed confesses. And that God is not the generic god of the man-made religions of the world. Allah, the God of Islam, cannot save you because he is not the true God. **Allah does not have a Holy Spirit equal in majesty with him, nor does Allah have a Son, whom he sent into the world to redeem it.** If you pray to Allah, you are not praying to the true God. God is not only one person, **for one person cannot offer himself as a sacrifice to himself for the sins of the world**. But Jesus’ words are plain as daylight when he says in our Gospel, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish eternally, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

You have eternal life, because you have been born from above. Jesus says to Nicodemus, “**Unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).** You are, you can. You do. For Every Sunday you are in the heavenly throne room just as the prophet Isaiah was in our OT reading. Isaiah says the same thing you do when you come into the presence of God here, “**I am a man of unclean lips.**” Isaiah knows that sin cannot stand in the presence of God and so he rightly repents, “**Woe is me**.” But the Lord doesn’t send him away, nor does he destroy Isaiah in his sin. Instead he sends his angel to take coal from the altar of sacrifice and touch Isaiah’s lips to make them clean, so he can speak the word of God and not be destroyed. So that he can stand in the presence of the lord with his guilt taken away and his sin atoned for (Isaiah 6:6).

Brothers and sister, the true body and blood of Jesus Christ today is taken from the altar of the cross and touches your lips. **Just as the fire is in, with and under the coal in Isaiah's vision; so to the divine and human body and blood of Christ are under the bread and wine given and shed for you in this place.** Jesus paid for the forgiveness on the cross that reaches your lips today. It takes your guilt away and makes you clean to speak the Word of God, and respond to your Baptismal call in full confidence, “Here I am, Send me!”

Today two children of the Triune God were baptized into his Triune Name. One is a nursing infant, the other is a catechized teenager. **One can speak the Athanasian Creed other can’t, but both believe it, and both are saints**. Both have received the same Spirit as you have, and both have lips from whom God receives the same praise. Both have the same faith as you do, in the Three in One who is Simply God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

“**Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who has been born of the Spirit**.”