

Pako Evening Service: 01/05/2016

Welcome / Prayer. Greeting: Congregation, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of Heaven and Earth." Grace, Mercy and peace be unto us, from God the Father, and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit...Amen.

Singing "God and God alone."

Apostles' Creed

Offering: Local Church – WT.

BoW: 379 "My God how wonderful you are"

Scripture Readings: Deut 6:1-9; Luke 9:28-36;

Sermon: "The Triune God who saves"

BoW: 170 "Praise to the Lord; the Almighty"

Benediction: "May the grace of Christ our Saviour, and the Father's boundless love, with the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above"

BoW: 533 "Praise God from whom all blessings flow"

Prayer Points:

Jackie & Emma; Arie Broekhuizen, Edith Zorn;

Give thanks for Reesink's 60th.

Congregation, last week Sunday evening I emphasized that reading and knowing God's word is important for it is the basis for our Christian faith.

It's primarily through the Scriptures how we see the Triune God, bringing about our election, salvation and sanctification, unto glorification.

We didn't come to faith because we were so clever. Rather, the God Triune has caused us to family and friends so that we get hear the saving message of Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit has used that to bring us to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

So those of us who are in Christ have no reason to boast, but every reason for thankfulness. Without the Triune God working for us, through us and in us we would never be saved to eternal life!

So how do we say to our unbelieving friend that we worship one God made up of three persons? It's not the sort of thing you start speaking about when you initially want to bring a simple gospel message.

Yet, it is a doctrine that is taught in Scripture and somehow we need to be able to get our heads around

it a little. On the one hand we say with the OT Jew, that the Lord our God is one (Deut 6:4), yet we also believe that there are three persons in the God-head, each with a different task.

We confess with heart and voice that there is God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth who initiated salvation. We confess that there is God the Son, the Saviour, our Deliverer and Redeemer.

And we confess that there is God the Spirit who is our sanctifier, the One who makes us holy. We worship one God in three persons!

Now the best way to explain this understanding of God is ultimately by pointing to God's Word, for it is in His Word that the Triune God has revealed himself to us most comprehensively.

Yet, even so, that doesn't completely resolve the difficulty.

Sure we can tell people that God is all powerful, all present, all knowing. We can tell them that he loves and cares and can be angry and all those things the Bible reveals to us about God.

However, the problem is that even our best description still falls short of a full description. Our finite, sinful, little minds cannot fully comprehend or describe our great Triune God.

He's far greater than ice, liquid and steam, even though their base is water. He is far more than a triangle of equal sides. The reality is that this side of heaven we cannot fully comprehend or describe our Triune God.

Now in a real sense that is sad. For if we could only find the right words that could describe our most wonderful, loving God, then perhaps many unbelievers would come to faith.

How often don't we just want to tell people what believing in Jesus means for us! We as believers simply stand in awe of Him, we delight in Him and what he has done and is doing and what he still promises to do!

Oh how lovely it is to just bask in his glory and the knowledge of him, even though this side of the grave it may be limited. Yet, words escape us to say it well. We cannot find the right words.

Interestingly, even in today's world, there are many people who acknowledge that there is a God, or at least

some sort of intelligent being who has created the heavens and earth.

Yet history has shown and I believe it is just as true today, many have difficulty in acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God and equally God.

Many years ago, a man called Arius, around 260 AD, taught that Jesus is the first and best created being that God made. The JW's still teach this today. They usually quote Col 1:15 incorrectly.

For them, Jesus is not seen as equal with God the Father, nor as His Son, but as some created being, albeit the best created being.

But Col 1:15, isn't about Christ being the first and best created being God made, but about his rights and privileges as a Son, similar to OT birthright. Jesus had priority, pre-eminence, and sovereignty as verses 16-18 go on to explain.

The Apostle John addresses this heresy in 1 John 2:22
“Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son.”

John writes such strong words because if Jesus is not equally God, or not the Son of God, then we cannot be sure of our eternal salvation, for a “created being” could never satisfy the justice of God for our sin.

Strangely, Jesus’ enemies actually understood who Jesus was better than the JW’s. When Jesus said to the crippled man in Mat 9:2-3; “take heart son, for your sins are forgiven” the Jews were fuming for they believed only God could forgive sins. They believed Jesus to be blaspheming.

The Jews were committed to Deut 6:4, that God is one. And for someone to come along and claim they could forgive sins would not only be rather arrogant, it meant that they claimed to be God. And for this, the Jews eventually hung Jesus on the cross (Jn 19:17).

Now we have a couple of instances when all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned. At Jesus’ baptism, in Mat 3 and Luke 3, and the transfiguration in Luke 9.

Doubting Thomas had to finally fall on his knees and confess “My God and my Lord” when he saw the resurrected Jesus standing before him.

Thomas was confronted with the mystery that Jesus was also God. He confessed the faith that is beyond comprehension. In fact, every time someone professes their faith it's a great blessing, for the Triune God has led them to this profession.

I say it's a blessing, for many people seem to be happy to have a God whom they call Father, but when Jesus is mentioned, he is often used as a swear word and I cringe every time.

Why is it that so many people take God's name in vain and why is that our Saviour's name is used as a swear word and blasphemed?

I once asked a senior Bible Study, "Why is it that the Name of Mohammed isn't blasphemed?" Aside from the fact that Muslims get very angry about that, I think it is because Satan already has Mohammad but he hates Jesus.

The point is that if sinful man admits that Jesus is God's Son, then they have to admit that they are sinful and need saving! And Satan doesn't want that for a moment!

So thanks be to God the Father, who chose all believers here and outside these walls to be in Christ before the world began.

Thanks be to God the Father who already announced that His Son would be the Saviour when Adam and Eve fell into sin and contaminated all mankind.

Thanks be to God the Father for teaching His chosen people to bring sin offerings on the day of atonement which pointed to His Son's perfect sacrifice on the cross with which his Father was satisfied.

Thanks be to the Son who willingly and freely came down to do the Father's will. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit who quickened us to life!

Is it any wonder that we read of men and angels singing to God and to the Lamb in heaven? Rev 4:11; "You are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being."

Rev 5:12, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise."

Rev 5:13; “To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power forever and ever.” And then the whole cosmos replies with a loud ‘Amen’.

Scripture actually commands the worship of the Son. “Every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father” [Phil 2:11].

That’s why idol worship is so abhorrent for the Christian! When Paul and Barnabas healed the crippled man in Lystra (Act 14) the people brought bulls and wreaths to make sacrifices to them.

And Paul and Barnabas ripped their clothes, and shouted to them not to do this but to worship the living God. The apostle John was so overcome with his vision of heavenly things in Rev 22 that he bowed down before an angel.

And the angel said, “I am a fellow servant with you, don’t worship me but God.” God and God alone!

So God the Father initiated salvation. God the Son accomplished it at Calvary and beyond.

Let's now turn our attention to God the Holy Spirit, who also had much to do with bringing us to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, let us understand that God the Holy Spirit is equal with the God the Father and God the Son. When Ananias and Sapphira had lied to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5, they were told that they had not lied to men, but to God!

But let's be a little more practical about the Holy Spirit. Once the God the Father has called us and God the Son has given his life for us, the Holy Spirit gets to work.

This teaching of the Triune God is more than dry doctrine. It is not something we leave on the shelf. God the Father's work, God the Son's work has an effect on us, and that effect is brought about by the work of God the Holy Spirit.

I sometimes ask this question at Bible Studies? How do we come to know God the Father? Through the God the Son! How do we come to know God the Son? Through the God the Holy Spirit!

How do we come to know God the Holy Spirit? We don't. He comes to us and makes himself known. Whenever we hear the Word of God, the Spirit knocks at the door of our hearts.

And when he has broken or overcome our resistance, our whole being becomes the ground, the instrument for the work of the Triune God. It is then that we become an offering of praise.

And the proof of our profession is in daily living. We all know that if we say we love God and hate our neighbour we are liars (1 Jn 4:20).

We cannot claim, through the Son, to have God as the Father without having the love of God's Spirit within us, for God is One.

Those of us who have been Christians for some time know that God is above us and for us only when He is in us.

He is the one and only God who exists in three persons. That is exactly what makes us different from those who do not believe. Believers know the Triune God and unbelievers don't.

Now we may be inclined to say that our unbelieving friends and neighbours should be the beneficiaries of that new life, that light within us and that is undoubtedly true. But it is not the first thing.

We, and our neighbours for that matter, have been created for one purpose and that is to praise and glory of God. All of us come to our goal and purpose in life when we praise God.

Therefore, our conversion, our change from being dead people walking to becoming alive in Christ brought about by the Holy Spirit applying God's word, is that we praise God.

In fact, all talks about God, all sermons, all books, miss the point unless they help us to praise Him. The greatest moments in our lives are those in which we spontaneously sing to God, "Praise to the Lord, let all that is within me adore him."

Have you ever experienced that? Psalm 98 calls on everything to sing to God. Floods, fields and mountains. Rev 5 – the whole universe sings about our awesome God! That is real living – praising God, delighting in Him!

That is where the meaning of life is found. You are not alive when you merely exist from day to day! Our greatest moment is not pay day, or retirement day, or graduation day, our greatest moment is when we can praise our loving Redeemer Triune God!

You don't have to be a theologian or a scholar to experience that. Doesn't matter who you are, just come to the point where you can sing, "My God how wonderful You are, how beautiful."

We must come to a point in our lives when we can sing it in the morning, at sunset, in the evening. We must come to a point when we can sing it at work, at a wedding, yes, even at a funeral.

"My God, oh, let all that is within me adore You." For you are my God, three in One! God can bless people with sorrow.

He can punish with prosperity. He can convert unrighteousness into justice, and turn evil to our benefit. And he can do that because He is God and there is no other! Him we praise today, tomorrow and forevermore.

So the next time we see a profession of faith, remember, we have seen the Triune God in action.

May those of us who have professed their faith, never stop marvelling at our Creator, Redeemer, and our Sanctifier. Indeed, may all that is within you and us adore Him! Amen.