

## **Sermon Draft**

**Text: John 3:1–17**

**Sermon: Holy Trinity 2021**

There are many unexplained phenomena in nature. For instance, there is something called *Quantum Superposition*. Scientists at Stanford University have discovered that one atom can be found simultaneously in two different places, even connected miles apart!

Albert Einstein called this “spooky action.” Sound strange? Indeed, beyond our imagination! Science has shown that when something travels extremely fast in relation to another thing, time actually slows down for the speedy thing. We’re not talking about clocks, but we are talking about time itself. Sound strange? Indeed, beyond our imagination!

Should not the Creator of such things be even more incomprehensible? If the nature of atoms or time can be outside our thinking, does it not make sense that the very nature of God is outside our comprehension? Truly, this is the nature of our triune God. Holy Scripture, not science, reveals that there is but one God, one being, one essence.

Yet Scripture reveals that, beyond our comprehension, there are three distinct persons, each person different from the other two, yet each person being 100 percent God

***“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (v 16).***

Love is expressed by giving something of great value, and the greatest demonstration of love is to give one’s own life. A parallel to the love shown by giving oneself is the giving of one’s child for the sake of another. A profound act of love was shown when Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son out of love for God. Abraham loved God in this way, that he was willing to give his only son, Isaac.

In a similar but infinitely greater way, God the Father demonstrates his love for the world by giving his one and only Son. In John 3:16 where we read that God “so” loved the world, the Greek word for “so” does not mean “so much.” It is not that God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son—though, of course, he did! The Greek word means “in this way.”

Thus John 3:16 is translated accurately with the wording “God loved the world in this way, that he gave his one and only Son.”

It is not a coincidence that John 3:16 is prefaced by a lengthy explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible and the history of mankind are about this very thing: God showing his love for the world by giving his only Son, and the giving of his Son is entwined with the working of the Holy Spirit. Throughout history, God indeed kept loving the world by giving his Son, and he always gives his Son in connection with the Holy Spirit.

As God demonstrates his love for the world again and again, we see the doctrine of the Trinity conveyed. Understanding the doctrine of the Trinity begins by realizing that there is but one God, one being, one essence. Yet there are three distinct persons—identified clearly in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Scripture informs us that each of these three persons is completely and fully God. Thus, we can say of the Father, “There is no other God.” And we can say of the Son of God, “There is no other God.” And we can say of the Holy Spirit, “There is no other God.” Still, as Scripture repeats, there is only one God, one being, one essence.

We cannot grasp the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, yet we can only begin to understand God's love for the world if we believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The word trinity is not found in the Bible. But from the beginning to the end we find the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. We will find the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as we recognize that at the highlights of salvation history, God is loving the world by giving His only son, entwined with the Working of the Holy Spirit. So, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which we consider this Sunday morning in particular, isn't some lifeless academic discussion. It is really a love story.

God loved the world in this way: he gave his Son to create the world. In the beginning God (the Father) created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). The Spirit, brooding over the waters, would breathe life into this watery world (Genesis 1:2). When God spoke, he was creating through his Son, with whom the world was designed to be uniquely intimate (Genesis 1:3; John 1:1–5; Hebrews 1:2; Proverbs 8:30).

Man rejected God's loving gifts of this creation, and thus man ceased to be intimately associated with the Son of God, who walked in the garden of paradise. In rejecting God, man became the "walking dead," citizens of Satan's domain (Ephesians 2:1–2).

After man's fall into sin, God loved the world in this way: he gave his Son in the promise of salvation. In his love, the Father promised a seed of a woman to conquer Satan (Genesis 3:15). The Son is the heart of God's word of promise.

The Spirit inspired the prophets to foresee the beautiful Savior, the one who fulfills God's promise (1 Peter 1:10–11; 2 Peter 1:21; Isaiah 53). By God's loving promise of the Savior, the Spirit breathed faith and hope into his ancient people's hearts. Theirs was an Old Testament faith that trusted in the coming Savior and a hope that yearned for life eternal.

To save fallen man, as promised, God loved the world in this way: he gave his Son to become flesh. The Father sent his Son into this world (John 3:17; 8:42). The Spirit caused the incarnation in the womb of Mary. The Word (the Son) became flesh (John 1:14).

The world did not recognize or accept the Son of God with whom there was to be intimacy. They so rejected him that they purposed to kill this Son of the vineyard owner (Matthew 21:37–39). Yet, God loved the world in this way: He gave up his only Son on the cross to save the fallen world.

To save his haters, the Father willed that his Son be given into their hands. The Spirit guided the Son to obey the Father and be lifted up on the cross. Jesus trusted the Spirit-inspired promises of the Old Testament; ***“Was it not necessary the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”*** (Luke 24:26).

Jesus trusted the Spirit as the Spirit led him into the wilderness of Satan’s domain. The Son submitted to his Father’s authority and thus was crucified and raised again, winning salvation for fallen mankind (John 10:18). Then God loved the world in this way: he gave his Son to save us by faith.

The Father desires that we be saved by believing in him whom he has sent (John 3:15–16; 6:29). Believing in the Son who for us died and rose again is the heart of Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:1–3). By the Spirit’s power, we are given to believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:3).

God continues to love the world in this way: he gives his Son to sinners through the Word and Sacraments.

The Father has given us His Word and Sacraments to bring us to and strengthen faith through the power of the Holy Spirit that we become his children in Christ. The preaching and bestowal of the Sacraments convey Christ, our Savior. The Holy Spirit, as of old, still works through the preached and sacramental Word to bring new birth and faith. Finally, God loves the world in this way: he will give his Son to call believers to paradise.

The Father has given all judgment to his Son (John 5:21–22). The Son of God will return to this world and speak the dead to life (John 5:26–29). The Spirit will give immortal life to our formerly mortal bodies (Romans 8:11).

So, we shall know our God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit into eternity. The Father will eternally love us, as into eternity he yet gives his Son, who as a man conceived by the Holy Spirit will continue to dwell with us uniquely, banqueting with us in the heavenly mansions forever.

Amen