

Sermon Draft for June 15, 2025

Text: John 8:48–59

Sermon: “Word” “Trinity Sunday 2025”

In the Augsburg Confessions we read: ***Holy Trinity offers the Church opportunity to honor the mystery of God’s triune nature. It is fitting that Trinity Sunday be observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, since the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions teach that “God is one divine essence. . . . Yet there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . These three persons are of the same essence and power” (AC I 2–3).***

This teaching is beyond human comprehension and can be believed only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Special liturgical orders and days to commemorate the Holy Trinity were first developed in reaction to the heresy of Arianism, although it was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that the Western Church designated the first Sunday after Pentecost as the festival of the Holy Trinity.

In today's world of universalism and pluralism, in which there is much confusion as to the identity of God, it is as important as ever to emphasize that the one true God is the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, revealed to us in Scripture. Any gods other than the triune God are false gods.

White, the liturgical color, represents the purity, perfection, and holiness of God. Many churches hold to the custom of confessing the Athanasian Creed. As we have.

Probably one of the most important characteristics that we want to see in a friend, or perhaps in the people we work with or work for, is that they keep their word. It's about integrity, isn't it? We know how frustrating it can be when someone says, "Don't worry. I'll take care of it," and then we find out later that the task we asked them to do went undone. Or when someone says something like, "Yes, I'll be at the meeting tomorrow, and I'll support you," but then the day of the meeting comes and your fellow employee either doesn't show up or shows up but doesn't speak up on your behalf.

It's about keeping your word. It's important to us that our friends keep their word, so we can trust them to be there when we need them the most.

In our Gospel today, we hear about keeping a word also. It's not about keeping our word or our promises, but rather about keeping the Word of God. Keeping the Word here takes on a whole new meaning, because it's not about putting our trust in ourselves or in other human beings, but about putting our trust in the Word of him who is completely trustworthy, Jesus Christ. Jesus says in our text, ***"I do know [the Father] and I keep his word"*** (v 55). And then later he says that there are great benefits for those who keep his Word. So today, let us keep the Word of Christ.

Let us keep the Word of Christ because he is the Son of God. The Jews in their spiritual blindness could not understand who Jesus was (v 48). They were aware of his earthly ancestry but could not apprehend his divinity (vs 52–53).

So, they insulted him, accusing him of being a Samaritan and having a demon. Soon their hostility escalated, and they were ready to stone him to death (v 59).

In our day, the question “Who is Jesus?” still attracts attention. Some see him as merely a great teacher or prophet (for example, Islam). Others are very hostile, seeing him as a fraud or cause of violence in the world today. Those who would neglect God’s kingdom are not just indifferent, but they are hostile, even as we are spiritually enemies of God apart from faith in Christ (Romans 5:10).

For some people, religion in general, and Christianity in particular, is seen to be one of the great problems of humanity. Remember the old song “Imagine,” written by John Lennon? It’s one of the most popular songs of modern times, but the words imply that the world would be a much better place without religious beliefs:

***Imagine there's no heaven It's easy if you try No hell below us
Above us, only sky Imagine all the people Livin' for today
Imagine there's no countries It isn't hard to do Nothing to kill or
die for And no religion, too***

Even we would have to confess that we sometimes fail to remember just who Jesus is and his love for us, causing us to doubt his goodness or even to struggle inwardly with his authority over us. But he makes his eternal nature clear by stating, “**Before Abraham was, I am**” (v 58). He is the Son of God, who is both God and man. Like the Jews, we cannot fathom that mystery. How could it be? It is grasped only by the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus we see the economy of the Godhead at work: The way to the Father is through faith in the Son, which is possible only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us keep the Word of Christ because he has made precious promises through his Word. We get to know God: who he is and his love for us.

His Word promises that Christ has overcome the devil and hell and that sin cannot harm us (Acts 2:31–36). His Word promises eternal life.

Those who are not of God will find only death. Those who are of God through the Word will find life, as he has said, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” and, “For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD”*** (Proverbs 8:51, 35).

Let us keep the Word of Christ because it brings joy and gladness to our lives here and now. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and it brought him joy and gladness (v 56). He knew that God would someday send the Messiah. Even though Abraham lived some two thousand years before Christ, he trusted in the promises of God that the Savior would come. For Abraham, the promise of God was as sure as having seen it himself. Abraham rejoiced in the knowledge of the Savior because he knew it would bring great spiritual blessing to the world.

We, too, can rejoice in the knowledge of the Savior and be glad. To know that Jesus came and honored and glorified the Father perfectly with his obedience in our place proves God's great love for us. To know that God has always made provision for our eternal welfare, whatever happens in this life, brings us joy and gladness, even in the midst of our sorrow and sadness.

So, we can see here that keeping the Word of Christ brings blessings far beyond what we could ever expect to receive from any other human being. To keep the Word of Christ means that we can have faith in who he is, the Son of God, as we confessed in our creed today: ***“It is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man”*** (Athanasian Creed). It means also that we can trust in his promises, that he has overcome death and sin for us, and we will not see death, we will not see eternal death.

And finally, to keep the Word of Christ means that we can be encouraged and have joy and gladness in this life, knowing that no matter what happens, God's love for us in Christ is an eternal reality.

Amen