

Praise the triune God who saved us
John 16:12-15

¹² “I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak. He will also declare to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I said that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.

I'd like to begin this sermon with an apology. I must admit that in the next several minutes I will fail to give you a complete explanation about our God. It's not because I didn't make adequate time to study the text that is before us. I feel I did study the text. It's not that I didn't pay attention when doctrine was taught at the seminary. It's just that any human language does not contain a vocabulary that is adequate to explain who God is. All the world's libraries do not contain enough shelf space to hold the volumes of books needed to explain our God. There's not enough gigabytes in any computer system that can store all the information about our God. But God doesn't need libraries or computer memory to explain who he is. He has given us all the information we need to know about him in one book—the Bible. No, the Bible doesn't tell us all there is to know about God. You could read it cover to cover several times over and you're still not going to know God completely. But I'm not here to explain a God whose existence surpasses all understanding. I am here to lead you in praising that God. That's because our triune God has done everything necessary to rescue us from our sin's punishment. He has brought us into a loving and lasting relationship with him. So let's not rack our brains trying to understand our triune God. Instead let's praise our triune God for saving us! He does this by guiding us in all truth. He does it by revealing his glory.

Our Lord Jesus didn't expect his first disciples to understand everything about God. But he did want them to know more about him. That's why he told them, *“I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now.”* Jesus had gathered with his closest followers on the evening before that dreadful day of crucifixion. He had told them many things that were going to happen. He also told them that he was leaving them. And the apostles were upset to hear that. This news shook them so that they found their faith failing them. With those frightful events just before them, Jesus knew they couldn't handle much more.

What he couldn't tell them now, he would share later. And all that Jesus wanted to tell them would not just come from him. He tells them, *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own, but whatever he hears he will speak. He will also declare to you what is to come.”* On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would fill each of the disciples. They would now be able to piece together the events in Jesus' life and death. They now could see how they all came together to save them. At his baptism in the Jordan River the Triune God revealed himself with a voice from heaven, a descending dove, and this man from Nazareth. Shortly after this the Spirit of God threw him into a deserted area where his heavenly Father decided to hold off necessary provisions for him for forty days.

And Jesus, despite his weakened condition, left stones as stones and remained content resisting every temptation the devil shot his way. Shortly after this final gathering in the upper room, the disciples selfishly slept while Jesus painfully struggled in the garden begging his Father for some other way but the cross. But when his prayers were complete, he'd make sure his Father's will was done. He chose the only way to save us—a cross. He'd hang there for hours forsaken by his Father. His innocent life was cut short, but only for three short days. Then he returned to life. God was satisfied with Jesus' complete payment for sin. Our triune God was victorious. With an empty tomb God declares us all forgiven of sin. And God's Spirit would go out into the whole world and give sinners understanding and faith to know that God has done everything possible to save us from sin. He'd do this through disciples faithful witness of our Lord. Now all of Jesus' disciples have praise in their hearts and on their lips. The Holy Spirit guides us in the truth that our triune God has saved us.

We definitely need the Holy Spirit to guide us in truth today. So many in our world consider truth relative and not absolute. Our world teaches what may be wrong for one is not necessarily wrong for another. It tells us your lifestyle is perfectly right no matter how immoral it may seem to others. The debate still rises whether life inside the womb has any rights. And are we playing God when we decide that life should end for a person whose quality of life doesn't meet a certain standard. The world's humanism is infecting our children's education.

Living in times of lies, we need our God to send us his Spirit of truth. We need God to convince us that we could never meet his perfect standard, no matter how hard we try. We've done nothing to earn his favor. We've done everything to deserve his wrath and punishment. We need God's Spirit to lead us in the truth of our salvation. We need him to remind us of God's love. That love led him to take on human flesh. It led him to do what we could never dream of doing. He lived a perfect, holy life all the time. We need to go back to his cross where he willingly went to suffer punishment for every one of our crimes against God. We need to hear him say, "It is finished," and watch him give up his spirit. We need to return to his tomb and find it empty. We need to keep hearing, and reading, and studying God's Word so the Spirit of God will guide us in all truth. We need to go back to our baptism and celebrate our spiritual birth into the family of God. And then live each day as a baptized child of God. We need to frequent his table and receive his body and blood for our forgiveness. That way you will always have reason to praise our triune God for saving you.

Not only does God guide us in truth so we can praise him for saving us, he also reveals his glory. When Jesus promised his disciples the Holy Spirit, he told them, *"He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything the Father has is mine. This is why I said that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you."* By saying this, Jesus was telling his faithful followers that he was equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit. All three persons of God share everything equally. And that included glory. The apostles needed to hear that. That's because they witnessed in the next couple of days didn't seem glorious. Very shortly they would witness Jesus' arrest. They will see him bound and

put on trial. They would see the scars made by soldiers' whips and his bruises from their beatings. Where was the glory in that? His body was so weak, he needed assistance carrying his cross. Step by step he struggled down the path that led to his death. For hours he hung there gasping for every breathe until he breathed his last.

In such humility, it's hard to believe that all the fullness of God lived in that battered and bloody body. But then he returned to life and revealed his glory. Many of his followers would see him in glory, but what about the rest of the world? How would they ever know his glory, especially when he returned to heaven forty days later. Jesus would send them the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit could reveal his suffering, death, and resurrection as a glorious event to a sinful world. It all started on Pentecost. It didn't matter what language you spoke. In Jerusalem that day you heard about Jesus' glory in your own native tongue. Then you were reminded of your guilt for putting the Son of God to death. But you were led to repent and you were baptized. You received forgiveness for every sin. You were left with the sure hope of eternal life. Since that glorious day almost 2000 years ago, the Holy Spirit has been poured out to billions who have heard the gospel and through it have seen God's glory. Already in this life, they've begun to praise their triune God knowing they will praise him forever for saving them.

A few centuries following the time of the apostles, Christian praise for our triune God was challenged by some who denied that a triune God even exists. That's when Christians got together to write what they believe Scripture teaches about the trinity. That statement of belief is called the Athanasian Creed. We will use that creed to confess our faith in our triune God after this sermon is over. The challenge to our belief in the trinity was not just a problem in the early church. We are challenged today to confess our faith in the triune God. That challenge may come from people who knock on your door—Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormon missionaries. It may come from a Muslim doctor you go to see. When they come knocking or there's some alone time in the exam room, will you be ready to give the reason for the hope you have? Boldly confess your faith in the triune God. Tell others how he took on human flesh while remaining true God. Tell them how he suffered death for them and rose to life in victory over the grave. Tell them there's a place in heaven for each of us. What better way is there to praise the triune God who saved you?

We don't need libraries or computer systems to explain God. We simply need his Word which tell us, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). And that one God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Though we can never fully capture what God is like, we can still praise him for guiding us in all truth and revealing his glory. As we look ahead to our home of glory, where we see our triune God face to face, we know what we'll be doing there. We will serve our God forever. We will spend an eternity praising our triune God for saving us.