

There is an ancient saying to which we Christians DO NOT subscribe. Here's the saying: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." I'll be you've heard this saying, maybe even said something like it, in jest.

The underpinnings of this saying are biblical, sort of. Someone clever has spliced two sayings from Hebrew scripture together.



- The "eat, drink, and be merry" part comes from Ecclesiastes 8:15, which says, "I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun."
- The rest comes from Isaiah 22:23, which says, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." But whoever spliced these two scripture passages together ignored that the prophet Isaiah called this thinking an "iniquity." God had called the people in Jerusalem to repent but instead they partied on.

In his first letter to the Corinthians (15:32) the Apostle Paul renounced the party-on philosophy. Paul said, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.'" Clearly the people in Corinth were living as if this life is all there is, and Paul called them to account. For Paul, Jesus having been raised from death, Jesus being the Christ, we don't die but transition to eternal life. For Paul, we need to live our lives here—as Christ would have us live—because tomorrow we WON'T DIE. For Paul, when our bodies stop functioning here, we will physically transition into the next phase of our eternal life.

At Nancy Willis' funeral yesterday, we heard in John's gospel (5:24-27) that our eternal lives begin the day we hear Jesus' words and believe in the Lord who sent Jesus to us. So, we have all begun our eternal lives here, and are just waiting for our physical bodies to stop functioning here before moving to our new eternal abode with Jesus.

Paul named the impulse to "eat, drink, and be merry" as "living according to the flesh." In our second lesson today, Paul said that those who live "according to the flesh" "will die." Paul contrasted

living “according to the flesh” with living as led by the Spirit of God. So, we have these two contrasting ways of life that beckon to us: live in the here-and-now with no thought of God or our future OR live for God and the future that is already ours.

Let me be clear, though, there’s nothing wrong with eating or drinking or even being in a good mood. Delighted with the gift of life, filled with the joy of the Lord, those all testify that we have life. We just are not to claim these as our life’s goals. Because, in the end, oblivious to God’s purpose for giving us life, oblivious about God’s Spirit working in and through us, uncaring that God came and lived among us to teach us how to live, our lives are, indeed, very short and meaningless.

What gives us purpose in life is God. What gives us joy in life is using the gifts God gives us to accomplish God’s purpose for our life. We eat and drink to fill us with the energy we need to do the thing that God made us to do, and here at church, to fill us with God himself, with love herself, to sustain us for the eternal journey.

By the way, have you noticed that this is Trinity Sunday? Did you know I’m supposed to be explaining the doctrine of the Trinity to you? Do you remember my yearly lament that it is almost impossible to preach on Trinity Sunday without committing heresy? Well, our very wise Senior Warden suggested a way today.

Paul’s letter to the Romans, our second reading, talks about the Trinity. According to Paul, we are to be a family, not of blood but of the Spirit of God. The more we live as Christ lived and taught, Paul says, the more we let the Spirit of God live in and through us, the more we become children of God. And once we are children of God, this makes us “brothers and sisters” of each other AND of Christ Jesus. We have been adopted into one family, God’s family, and we are God’s presence in our world.

In this way, from Paul we learn that God’s Spirit (who we call the Holy Spirit), draws us toward God (who Jesus called “Father”) and leads the way, urging us to act as one to continue the work of Christ Jesus (God’s Son). Here we have one of the very earliest explanations of the Trinity, not as doctrine but as actions we are to live in the world.

We don’t understand logically how God could be one, yet three. How God could simultaneously be:

- Maker of heaven and earth
- Not made by “eternally begotten” (and how did he get here in the first place?)
- Truly human and truly divine
- Un-being and Spirit and alive among us

- Unchanging but acting among us and even, for a while, dead
- Infallible yet human
- Crucified by alive again (and where was he when he was dead?)
- Not here but with us always

THIS is where we often fall into heresy: Trying to explain these human questions. But these seemingly impossible realities are our experience. We ponder them logically but suspend logic to just accept them for what they are: A matter of faith, questions that get worked out through a lifetime of worshiping God and then letting our worship lead us into living a healthy and authentic life to accomplish God's purpose for us. And then, after doing the God-work that we have been given, we let the Holy Spirit bring us back to thank God for all that God has given us: this life, our purpose in life, the recognition that all of God's creation is one, and the opportunity to share what God has given us.

When viewed from this perspective, the doctrine of the Trinity isn't very complicated. We can live the Trinity far easier than we can explain the Trinity. Let God, the Spirit of Truth, lead us into all truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord to act in his name.