

[OPENING SLIDE]

"Living Trinity"

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Introduction

[SLIDE # 2] It's a perennial problem facing the church today ... one highlighted by the familiar story of 4 people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

Whereupon, one day something needed to be done at church. *Anybody* could have done it, but *Everybody* was sure *Somebody* else would. The long and short of it, while *Anybody* could have done it, *Nobody* did. So, *Somebody* got angry about that, especially because it was *Everybody's* job. And *Everybody* thought *Anybody* could do it, but *Nobody* realized that *Somebody* wouldn't. Thus, it ended up that *Everybody* blamed *Somebody* when *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have done.

The congregation at Philippi did *not* have this problem. Where, in the last of our series on the 4-legged stool, I would like to highlight 2 things: 1) to celebrate the ministry of this congregation, and; 2) to make an appeal. Where, for up, in and out disciples, there's a 4th leg: serving Trinity with your time, talents and treasure.

Main Point: Where, the work of a disciple is never done, as the Lord continues to form and shape us into a community of saints who serve each other in mutual joy, "reminding each other of the goal, but even more of the joys attending the journey itself." (Burrell, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:162)

[SLIDE # 3]

LIVING UP, IN, AND OUT = LIVING TRINITY.

"To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."

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And so we come to the end of our "letter of joy." Where, recapping the points that Paul has made earlier, we come to the Spirit's gracious invitation to say "Yes!" Masterfully written, the aging apostle bids his congregation to ...

"Labor side by side with me in the gospel together with ... my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." (v. 3)¹

Who's in? Who's up? Who's out? Am I? Are you?

[SLIDE # 4] In Stephen Ambrose's book – *Undaunted Courage* – recounting the expedition undertaken by Lewis & Clark, the author offers this description of the two men who would ultimately lead the Corps of Discovery west, and back again:

"In general in areas in which [Meriwether] Lewis was shaky, [William] Clark was strong, and vice versa. Most of all, Lewis knew that Clark was competent to the task, that his word was his bond, that his back was steel. Clark knew the same about Lewis. Their trust in each other was complete ..." (97)

Such is the picture of the church at Philippi, ever ready to help, to support, and to bless the ministry with which they were entrusted. Demonstrating first of all that ...

[SLIDE # 5] LIVING UP AS A CONGREGATION GIVES BIRTH TO OUR LIVING IN.

¹Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. ²I entreat Euodia ["to have a good way ... have success ... be led successfully"²] ***and I entreat Syntyche*** ["the meeting ... successful event"] ***to agree*** ["stand together"] ***in the Lord.***

Where does the love of one member for another in the body of Christ come from? ***"In the Lord."*** Where do we come by the willingness to be a help to one another? ***"In the Lord."*** Where do we come to see ourselves as laboring side by side in this common endeavor of making Christ known? ***"In the Lord."*** It is this – life *"in the Lord"* – that results in rejoicing, and in our serving and blessing!

⁴[Ya'Il³] rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice [ya'Il] ... ⁵Let your reasonableness [forbearing spirit⁴] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand ...

¹ For an insightful observation of Paul's Greco-Roman style of writing see Kittredge a la Crainshaw, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:134, 136

² Weissenrieder, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:163; also Syntyche

³ "The command 'Rejoice' is in the plural, as are the rest of his commands here. Joy is incomplete unless it is shared." (Eddy, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:159)

⁴ NASB; also moderation (KJV), forbearance (RSV), gentleness (NIV, NKJV), "magnanimity, generosity, considerateness and kindness" (*Sermon Studies on the Epistles (A)*, 338)

... Fueling and firing everything we are/say/do ... where ...

⁶ *do not be anxious about anything, but **in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving** [we] **let your requests be made known to God.***

Then, and only then, will ...

⁷ *And **the peace of God** [where everything is “divinely normal”⁵], **which surpasses all understanding, will guard** [“has it over” – like Paul is himself being guarded] **your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

Our living up truly gives birth to our lives as disciples, lived in ... where, second ...

[SLIDE # 6] LIVING IN as Trinity FLOWS FROM WHAT WE FIX OUR MINDS ON.

Peter affirms this when he writes:

“You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house ... to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

Sometimes as stones – as stones often do – we’re going to grate on one another. One commentator says, “People engaged in a common pursuit, will inevitably jostle one another, often employing their sharp edges to find space for themselves.” (Burrell, 160) At times we won’t – like Euodia and Syntyche – see eye-to-eye.

[SLIDE # 7] Which is why we believe that if Jesus is Lord, we live together at the foot of the cross ... fixing our eyes upon Him who is our life and our goal.

It’s why we regularly gather around the Lord’s Table, where sinners alike, in need of mercy, come to receive the body broken and blood outpoured for the forgiveness of our sins. It is this life together – in repentance and faith – that enables us to celebrate what is good and right in our midst, instead of grumbling or finding fault ... but rather, focusing on:

⁸ *Finally, brothers, **whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.***

⁵ Franzmann

⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice [keep on doing] **these things, and the God of peace** [“the presence of Jesus”⁶] **will be with you.**

Wherein, finally ...

[SLIDE # 8] GOD’S WORK DONE IN GOD’S WAYS at Trinity WILL NEVER LACK GOD’S SUPPLY.

¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Where, in concluding his letter, Paul says ...

¹⁴ Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵ And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. **I am well supplied**, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. **¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.** ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

And so, gripping the 4th leg of our stool, how do these promises translate into a live of serving this congregation, this place from which we draw life and joy?

[SLIDE # 9] By supporting Trinity with our TIME.

Where, these Sundays of “green” are sometimes referred to as “Ordinary Time.” However, life in the body of Christ, is anything but. Yes, each Sunday is an opportunity to take joy in the profound life that we are given in Christ our Savior.

Trinity needs your not-so-ordinary time. Bake a loaf of bread for the member ... whose husband has just died ... Give a gift card to someone in need. Visit a church member in the nursing home. “Seemingly ordinary acts bear extraordinary gifts of God’s love.” (Crainshaw, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:162) But they take ... time!

[SLIDE # 10] You can also support Trinity w/your TALENTS – your unique S.H.A.P.E.

Wherein, each member of Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery had their unique gift ... [Share a few]. This is the Body of Christ. This is Trinity! This is you!

⁶ Burrell, *Feasting on the Word (A)*, 4:162

[SLIDE # 11] You can support Trinity with your TREASURE.

For those who are not a member of Trinity, I'm not talking to you right now. But I am talking to those who have come to follow Christ in this place. Where, first ... let me thank those of you who have faithfully supported this ministry – some of you going way beyond what you could do. But let me also challenge those of you who give little to consider what more you can do.

[SLIDE # 12]

"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver, and is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

[SLIDE # 13] You can support Trinity with your THANKFULNESS.

Wherein, joy is the "response formed in those who can read the economy of God's activity in particular ways, and are able to act in conformity of that unfolding story." (Fowl, *Philippians*, 18) Child of God, Jesus is in our midst ... and because of that, we can live that life to which we have been called – *with joy* – up, in, and out ... all the while serving this ministry which the Lord has entrusted to us.

Conclusion

[SLIDE # 14] What is M.I.N.I.S.T.R.Y.? A mentor of mine once described it this way [a prayer to the Lord in the form of an acrostic]: May I now in simple truth reflect you.

Yes, would that all of Christ's people continue to be filled with this mind for Christ, this kind of love for others, this kind of service in His name. For that kind of congregation of Somebody's would be a blessing for *Anybody* to be a part of.

Yes, may we be bold and courageous in this – to trust Jesus ... that one true **Somebody**, who came for *Everybody* so that *Anybody* would never be a *Nobody* ... that one true **Somebody**, who did what *Nobody* else could do, so that *Anybody* who hears His call would love and serve *Everybody* in His name!

[SLIDE # 15]

LIVING UP, IN, AND OUT = LIVING TRINITY.

"To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."

[Friday E-mail:] And so we come it ... **Philippians 4** ... and the 4th leg of our stool – the four marks of who God calls us to be as His disciples. Week 1? A disciple is one who lives up. Week 2? In. Week 3? Out. Week 4? Ah ... not so fast. For that, you'll have to wait until Sunday, unless you want to get a preview of it by reading the entirety of Philippians 4. Sound like a plan? [Pause devotion and come back☺]

It's a text, says one observer that consists of "'last words,' final reminders from the apostle to his beloved readers. [Where] the tone of the passage is endearing and reassuring, yet filled with straight talk and clear directives. [Here] we are hearing Paul the father, pastor, and teacher give words of lasting [comfort] and advice." [Craddock, A, 472] Not unlike what an aging parent might do for their children – to bless them with a word for the journey ... to stand firm in the Lord (v. 1), to agree in the Lord (vv. 2-3), and to "*rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.*"

Where, what you will notice right away, as with previous legs of our stool – of our lives as disciples – everything is connected to Jesus. Everything is "*in the Lord.*" Yes, "part and parcel" of *all* that we do, is bathed in grace – poured forth into our lives when our Savior called us in Baptism, continues to pour His Word into our lives, presses the precious gift of His body and blood to our lips. To be "*in the Lord,*" is ... well ... to be "*in the Lord,*" and for Christ to be in us. Wherein, what provides such confidence for living the life of a disciple in this world is the "reassurance that 'the Lord is near' (v. 5) ... whose "presence ... as peace, [is] understood not merely as the absence of strife, but as the state of positive well-being and fullness" ... experienced not only in the then, but also the now. (473)

It's something Paul encourages this elsewhere, when he writes in 1 Thessalonians:

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it." (5:23-24)

Yes, He will, child of God. Indeed, even now He brings His gifts to bear in our lives.

I recently heard Dr. Dale Meyer, a prominent father in the Lutheran Church say, "It is a great time to be the Church of Jesus Christ." Amen to that! Where, to be sure, there is plenty to war against such a sentiment. But as disciples, whenever we are *in the Lord,* our heavenly Father is glorified, and His work in and through us is blessed. Where, taking our rest there – in Christ – we can be sure that our living up, in or out is filled with purpose. Bringing us to that 4th leg ... SYOS!