

Holy Trinity A 2011

I look out my office window and watch the world go by.
 I wonder what panorama God is going to provide for me today?
 From my chair, I can see ducks and geese and doves and herons and eagles.
 I see turtle and rabbits and squirrels.
 And if it is an especially blessed day, I will see the white squirrel.
 I see trees and flowers and clouds and skies and rain and puddles.
 Amidst the asphalt and electric wires, the metal cars and the brick buildings, I see
 a world teeming with life, a world of God's creation.

I see something else.
 I see people- of all kinds and shapes and ages.
 I see the babies in strollers.
 I see the children in clumps.
 I see the youth walking to the high school.
 I see the young parents, the old parents.
 I see the elderly.
 I see a world teeming with life, a world of God's creation.

I am reminded of one of my favorite songs:
 I see trees of green...red roses too
 I see em bloom...for me and for you
 And I think to myself...what a wonderful world
 What do I think?
 I see skies of blue...clouds of white
 Bright blessed days...and dark sacred nights
 And I think to myself...what a wonderful world
 Oh, you must be looking out your window, too.

Dark nights that are sacred?
 Earlier this month, one visitor to our parking lot was a boy.
 I would put him upper elementary age.
 He was always on his bike.
 He would make big loops around the lot and lazy figure eights.
 He would bike down the creek and over to the practice field, and then come back.
 He would bike over to the Methodist Church parking lot, and then come back.
 Morning after morning, our guest rode his bike around our parking lot.

My initial thought was, "Shouldn't he be in school?"
Then I remembered: school was over.
We were on summer break. In fact, we were in the first days of the summer break.
Ahh. Now I understood.
He was bored.
Or...he was lonely.
He was looking for someone to play with, and there was no one.
His mom said, "Get out of the house and go play."
So he made his lazy eights to entertain himself.
He, too, my bike rider friend, is part of God's good creation.
There are worst things to do on a summer morning
than riding your bike around a church parking lot.

There are at least two ways to look at the world: scarcity and abundance.
Scarcity says that there isn't enough.
You never have enough.
You should spend all your energy protecting yours.
You should conserve.
You should grab and hold tight.

Abundance says there is enough to go around.
Take what you need and leave the rest.
Be generous.
Share.
Be satisfied with what you have.
Recognize the many ways that you have been blessed.
You can look at life and say, life is about scarcity, or life is about abundance.
Friends, I can tell you what I see out my window.
I see life in abundance.

You can look at God in the same way.
From a perspective of scarcity, faith in God sounds like this.
God only has so much forgiveness, so you better earn it.
God has limited mercy, so you better not misbehave.
God only loves a few, so you better be the perfect disciple.
Only the most righteous will get to heaven.
Because there isn't enough of God for everyone.

Or...

God forgives so much, you can just count on it.

You are free to make mistakes, because God already intends to forgive you.

God is so merciful, that there is nothing you can do to permanently blow it.

God loves the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that anyone who believes will not perish but will have eternal life.

In God's house, there are many rooms.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

We worship a God of abundance.

That's what I see out my window.

Our church language of the Holy Trinity is all about the abundance of God.

God is the creator of everything you see: the animals, the trees, the people.

What a wonderful world God has made for us.

Summer is a perfect time to enjoy it.

And if that's not enough for you, God is also the Savior, the Son, sent to die for your sins.

Who was raised by the power of God so that you can be raised also.

And if that's not enough for you, God is also the Holy Spirit, the presence of God in your life, constantly moving and shaping the world.

The Trinity is our language to say that God is so great and wonderful and majestic that one avenue of contact with us is just not enough.

We worship a God of abundance.

When we baptize, Jesus instructs us to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Hmmm; baptized into abundance.

The Church is not an exclusive club.

That is an image from scarcity.

The Church is an inclusive fellowship.

Everyone is included because everyone belongs to God.

That is an image of abundance.

Our Gospel story today are words of Jesus that we call The Great Commission.

They are some of the most important words of our Lord.

They occur right at the very end of Matthew's Gospel.

For 28 chapters, Matthew has told us the story of Jesus, his words, his teachings, his life, his death, his resurrection.

And now, at the very end, after all that, Jesus sends the disciples forth.
Go, he said.

The Love of God in Christ Jesus is not just for 12 disciples, or the 70, or the 512, or any other small number that you name.

It is meant for all people, because nothing less fits the generosity of God.

When Jesus said to us, "Go," he gave us more than Dennis Anderson's "Be kind."

He gave us marching orders that are concrete and specific.

In particular, he gave us three-fold instructions.

This is our "To Do" list.

First, MAKE DISCIPLES.

Disciples are people who live out faith in Jesus.

Disciples are people who put their faith into words and actions.

Disciples are people who continually want to deepen their faith and trust in God.

Disciples are people who want a faith that matters.

Disciples are never satisfied with membership.

Membership is cheap.

Membership requires next to nothing of yourself.

Jesus did not send us into the world to make members.

Jesus sent us into the world to make disciples.

Nothing less honors our abundant God.

Go, make disciples.

Jesus said, Go and BAPTIZE.

Baptism is not just a simple ritual of the Church.

Baptism is the promise of God that you are now claimed by God.

Baptism is all about God's abundant mercy, forgiveness, grace.

It is about extending that grace into the lives of people.

Go and Baptize.

Jesus said, Go and TEACH them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

Teach them.

They need to know.

In a world that claims scarcity, they need to know our God of abundance.

Tell them about Jesus.

Tell them about his love for tax collectors and sinners and prostitutes.

Tell them how everyone is included.

Teach them about the ways of God that we see in Jesus.

And remember, don't ever forget, keep in mind
I am with you always.

What a wonderful world.

What a wonderful God.

Peace to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ.