**All That Is Mine Is Yours**

**Trinity Sunday**

**A Sermon for Sardis Baptist Church**

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**John 16:12-15**

A few months ago, we explored Luke’s parable of the lost son, or as some scholars call it, the parable of the two sons. A younger son squanders his father’s inheritance, but returns home to find his father’s steadfast love and forgiveness. He even receives a banquet. The older son, the one who was left to do all the hard work while his brother was away on an adventure, he stands outside his father’s house and stews. The father pleads with his son, “Please come back to the party. Don’t you see? Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.”

Would that each of us could live with such assurance! Would that each of us could believe in the reality the parable proclaims: Somewhere in this universe is a parental force who tells us, “All that is mine is yours. And that is enough!”

Seriously, think about the magnitude of this statement: “All that is mine is yours.”

Really? Are you sure? The older brother had a hard time seeing it. He had no robe and ring, no fatted calf, no banquet in his honor. And in that moment, he wasn’t interested in generalities, he was interested in fairness. Tangible fairness. He wanted his father’s sense of love and grace to be parceled out in the same manner as his inheritance. And in his anger, and in his jealously, and his insistence on THIS world’s order, he could not accept the truth of his father’s assurance. And so even to this day, he STILL sits outside the banquet, not yet ready to embrace all that his father offers.

In the telling of this and other parables, Jesus proclaimed a truth: the Father’s kingdom is not bound to this world’s constraints. He told us that God’s love and God’s grace are simply enough. They are enough, because they are neither exhaustible, nor exclusive. No! God’s love and God’s grace are limitless and accessible.

The Jesus of all four gospels, is the son willing to believe, wholly and fully, in the audacity of the father’s claim: “All that is mine is yours!”

But the disciples, they’re like the son that still sits outside the banquet. It’s not that they are bad people, nor is their love of God inauthentic. It’s just not yet complete.

Like the older son, they still spend too much time focusing on God’s relationship with others, rather than God’s relationship with each of them. In their minds, the bigger God’s kingdom gets, the smaller their piece of the pie. They are eager to cling to the possibilities of God’s world, but not yet ready to give up the security of this world.

In today’s lection, we revisit the farewell discourse of Jesus in John’s gospel. Jesus reminds the disciples that he has many things to tell them, but that they are not yet ready to bear them.

As readers of John’s gospel, we have an advantage the disciples do not: we’ve read John’s prologue! And John’s prologue spells it out: The Word, the wisdom quality of God, that substance that had been around since the very beginning – it came into the world in the person of Jesus. But the world did not recognize that source, and the world rejected the Word. But to all those who believed in the Word and received him, was given the power to become children of God.

Jesus knows what’s coming. A trial. And death. And resurrection. And eventually, generations of believers who will pick up where he leaves off.

But Jesus is equipped. Jesus is filled with what John calls the spirit of truth. I’m mixing my gospel metaphors today, so forgive me, and please feel free to send a complaint to my homiletics professor.

But it seems to me that this spirit, or this agent, that Jesus has, it allows him to embrace the audacity of the father’s claim: “All that is mine is yours.”

Somehow, someway, John tells us that Jesus understands the bigness of God’s love. And this understanding gives him a courage and a capacity to declare what Stanley Saunders calls a bankruptcy, from any dependence on worldly powers. Jesus will reject social, political, economic, and religious norms because he knows the father’s love is enough. And he knows that nothing, not height, nor depth, nor powers, not even death, will separate him from such love.

Jesus tells the disciples: “When the spirit of truth comes (that same spirit that’s in me!), it will guide you into all the truth you need to know.”

And here’s my favorite part:

The spirt of truth will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Did you hear that? The love of God. The goodness of God. The capacity to embrace such love and goodness. These are not exclusive to Jesus. They are accessible to everyone. And the events that will soon unfold, will demonstrate this truth, now and forever more.

But not yet. The disciples are not yet ready to bear these things. But soon, they’ll be equipped.

When I read this lection, it stirs up memories of knowledge I could not yet bear as a child, knowledge I was not yet ready to hear:

* How can my mamma and daddy say they love me equally when they spent $60 on my brother’s high-tops and $56 on mine?
* Seriously, will I ever use Algebra?
* How come I didn’t get picked?

Sure, these are silly things to say. But as I grew up, I understood that parental love was not about acquiring things, but rather a knowledge that someone, no matter what, would offer me support. And every time I grocery shop, or try to determine how late I’m gonna be to my next appointment, I’m grateful for teachers who taught me how to do algebra in my head. And every time I don’t get picked for something or invited to the dance, I understand it’s not the end of the world, because subjective things do not determine my worth.

The disciples were not yet ready to understand, but Jesus tells them that something’s coming. Years later, a decade, two decades, perhaps three or four, when the disciples had become old men, and told the stories to their children and grandchildren, I wonder if this was a lecture they remembered fondly. “He said we weren’t ready, and he was right! But sure enough, one day, we understood. And sure enough, one day, you will too!”

Today is Trinity Sunday. And I’ll be honest with you. I have no interest in proving the merits of three-in-one, or spending a few hours debating what metaphors we should assign to this three-legged stool. I don’t think that’s what this Sunday is about. I think it’s a celebration of an unexplainable, but undeniable truth: Somewhere in this universe is a parental force who tells us, “All that is mine is yours.”

God says to the son who wanders: “All that is mine is yours!”

God says to the son who struggles to come back into the banquet: “All that is mine is yours!”

God said to a Galilean peasant: “All that is mine is yours!”

And God says to each of us: “All that is mine is yours!”

It’s a divine mystery to explain how this is so. So call it what you will: one, three-in-one, three hundred-in-one, three thousand-in-one, three million-in-one. No matter.

But respond in gratitude:

Thanks be to the God who is always with us.

Thanks be to the God who tells us “All that is mine is yours!”

Thanks be to the God who is a wonderful mystery.

Amen.