

**There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit**  
**A Sermon for Sardis Baptist Church**  
**Bob Stillerman**  
**Trinity Sunday**  
**6-16-2019**  
**John 16:12-15**

*We hold these truths to be self-evident.*

*And ain't I a woman?*

*Four score and seven years ago.*

*I have a dream.*

I needn't remind you of these phrases. You can most likely complete them: Words from the preamble to our Constitution, and from famous speeches by Sojourner Truth, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Such words are woven into the fabric of our democracy, and though the freedoms and hopes they express aren't experienced as fully and as truly as they need to be (there's always room for improvement!), I think most of us in this room can at least identify with them.

Our founding fathers, and Sojourner Truth, and Abraham Lincoln all occupied a space and time many, many, many years before any of us took our first breath. And those of us who did witness Dr. King's speech have a half-century of distance from it. And yet the power of such words, and the witness of those who spoke them, are still palpable today.

They may be historical figures, but their witness, and their spirit, and their relevance are still present. And we experience them every bit as wholly and fully as those who knew them in life.

I think today, on Trinity Sunday, we seek to acknowledge a parallel truth about the life of Jesus. Like all human beings, Jesus had a life existence that was limited to a particular space and to a particular time. That's just in accordance with the laws of nature. But the impact of the historical Jesus is not limited only to those who lived and experienced him in his own time.

Jesus, was filled with a substance John's author calls the Word, a kind of energy that has been around since the beginning. And the historical Jesus lived in such a way, as to channel that substance, or Word, or energy, or spirit, or whatever you wanna call it, in order that God might be revealed to God's people. In the life of Jesus, we've been given our best glimpse into the nature and character of God: One who loves and is love.

And in today's text, as Jesus says goodbye to his disciples, he tells them of a Spirit of Truth, a sweet, smart, strong woman, they called her Lady Wisdom in Proverbs, a presence that will guide them in truth. And it's this presence or this spirit that connects all of us, those who come before, during, and after the life of Jesus.

Sure, the Trinity is clumsy. So is any metaphor for God, because we are the non-divine seeking to explain a thing beyond our full comprehension. But even in its clumsiness, the Trinity offers something very profound: a connectedness to the source who created us, to the human being who shared our life experiences, and to the spirit that flows out of a creation living into its purpose.

Somehow, somehow, the love of God, manifested in the life of Jesus, transcends space and time with a spirit that fills the entire human existence. And through that spirit we are connected. And we are transformed. And we are loved. And we are God's children.

And I think that's to be celebrated even if you'd rather make the illustration with a square, or a pentagon, or hexagon, or leave geometry out of the entire equation.

And to me, it seems fitting that today, we'll share Communion, and we'll install our deacons, stewards, and trustees.

Because it's at a table, among those who serve one another, that the Christ of yesterday is made manifest today, and tomorrow, and the next day.

Jesus said to his disciples, "I've got so much to say, but you are not yet ready to bear it. That's for the future, but don't worry, you'll be equipped."

He said, "This is my body, for you! And this my cup, for you! And I love you! And I want you to eat at my table."

And when we break that bread, and when we drink that wine, there's a sweet, sweet Spirit that joins us. One that guides us in truth. And we don't need to live in first-century Galilee to know that the presence of the Christ is in this place.

A few years later, when the disciples were growing into their roles as apostles, they appointed deacons, and other helpers to serve the church. And throughout two millennia, people of faith, not yet knowing what they needed to bear, have listened for that sweet, sweet Spirit. And she has guided them to truth: voices called to speak up and advocate; hands called to lift heavy burdens; ears called to listen to those who have been ignored; eyes called to see how God works anew.

And with each spirit-inspired gift and act, the life of Jesus lives on in each of us.

Sardis Baptist Church, there's a sweet, sweet Spirit. And she's on her way. And when she gets here, she's gonna guide us in truth. May we be eager to greet her arrival whenever, however, whatever, and whomever she may be.

Amen.