### Proverbs 8:1-4; 22-31 New International Version (NIV)

**8**Does not wisdom call out?  
    Does not understanding raise her voice?  
**2**At the highest point along the way,  
    where the paths meet, she takes her stand;  
**3**beside the gate leading into the city,  
    at the entrance, she cries aloud:  
**4**“To you, O people, I call out;  
    I raise my voice to all mankind.

**22**“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,  
    before his deeds of old;  
**23**I was formed long ages ago,  
    at the very beginning, when the world came to be.  
**24**When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,  
    when there were no springs overflowing with water;  
**25**before the mountains were settled in place,  
    before the hills, I was given birth,  
**26**before God made the world or its fields  
    or any of the dust of the earth.  
**27**I was there when the Lord set the heavens in place,  
    when God marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,  
**28**when God established the clouds above  
    and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,  
**29**when God gave the sea its boundary  
    so the waters would not overstep his command,  
and when God marked out the foundations of the earth.  
**30**    Then I was constantly at God’s side.  
I was filled with delight day after day,  
    rejoicing always in God’s presence,  
**31**rejoicing in God’s whole world  
    and delighting in humankind.

### John 15:26-16:15 New International Version (NIV)

**26**“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. **27**And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

**16**“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. **2**They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.**3**They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. **4**I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, **5**but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ **6**Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things.**7**But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **8**When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: **9**about sin, because people do not believe in me; **10**about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; **11**and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

**12**“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **13**But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **14**He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. **15**All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Here ends this morning’s lessons. May God add a blessing to our understanding and our living out God’s Word.

“To Know God”

The Rev. Lisa J. Durkee

June 15, 2025

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

In anticipation of this Trinity Sunday, a friend of mine mused about what heresies all her preacher friends would be sharing. You know, heresy: a belief that goes against the accepted dogma of the church. It’s not a word we use very often these days, because there is such a whirling, swirling lot of statements of belief and non-belief out there, and such a strong urging that we treat nothing as sacred, that the idea of there being any certain truth about God flies in the face of our claims to individual power and worth. We have been taught to distrust statements or, dare I say, creeds. Still, on this Trinity Sunday, gathered as we are in worship to the triune God, I would like to tell my friend: I pray we speak boldly of our faith and our beliefs, and I pray we do not lean toward heresy. You see, I believe in God in three persons, our blessed Trinity, and this morning would like to share with you not only about some definition of trinity that makes sense to you, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to share with you about how we get to know and to love this God.

I watched the critically acclaimed film, *The Life of Pi*—long after it was in the theaters, and found myself thoroughly enjoying almost everything about it, and writing down powerful lines from the dialogue. Early in the film, as the title character speaks to the man to whom he shares his story, he gives a little lesson in something that was familiar to me from my time in India. There, I saw on one wall of a villager’s house images of Jesus next to various Hindu gods—Ganesh the elephant God, Shiva, known for his strength, and mixed in with these figures there was Yasu Das the singer of the current number one hit on the radio charts. All of them were objects of reverence. I had forgotten about this for a while, but was reminded of it when Pi says Amen, and his new friend remarks that he didn’t know Hindus say amen. “Catholic Hindus say Amen,” responds Pi, and then goes on to say that Catholic Hindus get to feel guilty in front of hundreds of gods.” Da-Da Ding. Please forgive me carrying forward this joke . . .

Continuing to muse about how Pi can maintain some kind of belief in the Hindu deities about whom he knew from his parents, and also believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, the conversation turned toward a simple statement that I think can help us in our understanding of Trinity, as well. Pi tells his new friend, very simply, “None of us knows God until someone introduces us.” Well, of course not! None of us knows anyone or anything until we are introduced, and the circumstances in which we *meet someone* often determine how that relationship might grow beyond an initial introduction.

I continue to be struck by my friend’s question about preaching a heretical concept of the Trinity. It’s o.k. if you don’t, by the way. Still, what strikes me about her question and concern is that it has everything to do with definitions, and little to do with relationship. When we talk about the persons of God, we do well to speak of our relationship with God, rather than our definition of God. I’m going to say that again. We do well to speak of our relationship with God, rather than our definition of God. This may help us to understand a bit better why it is that some persons who claim a faith or belief in the many gods of Hinduism or to know God through a prophet we don’t encounter in Christianity might indeed have a relationship with God that is true. Still, I believe that we know God differently because we know Jesus, the Christ, and because we recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit, the advocate whom Jesus sent and sends to us so that our relationship with God might be more complete.

How is it that you have been introduced to God? Do you remember when that took place, or was it many different times? We can also ask ourselves *to whom* we were introduced. For me, I was definitely introduced to Jesus—and to the Holy Spirit, and to God our creator parent. I was introduced to God in three persons, and I have come to believe in this God throughout my life, as I have encountered God in other people, in nature, and in a kind of ultimate stillness and peace that for me presents itself in nature and often in prayer, wherever I am. We can all stumble over the various creeds to which we may be asked to give voice, whether in church or in other organizations in which we participate. We can stumble and we could fall, if we forget that these statements should have more to do with relationship than with dogma. I rediscovered an understanding that makes sense to me when I read in Lauren Winner’s book, *Girl Meets God,* her quotation from Diana Eck’s *Encountering God*.

The Latin *credo* means literally “I give my heart.” The word *believe* is a problematic one today, in part because it has gradually changed its meaning from being the language of certainty so deep that I could give my heart to it, to the language of uncertainty so shallow that only the “credulous” would rely on it. Faith . . . is not about propositions, but about commitment. It does not mean that I intellectually subscribe to the following list or statement, but that I give my heart to this reality. *Believe*, indeed, comes to us from the Old English *belove*, making clear that this too is meant to be heart language. To say, “I believe in Jesus Christ” is not to subscribe to an uncertain proposition. It is a confession of commitment, of love.”

Still, I don’t want to make light of the importance of our having an understanding of this important notion of Trinity. I simply don’t think we do well to enter into some of the arguments that have split the church at different times through the ages. So, this morning, we can ask ourselves, how do we come to love God? We *are introduced* to God. It happens here, when we read scripture that tells us the stories of God’s interaction with humanity, beginning with creation, when the breath of God, often equated with the Holy Spirit, is breathed into us to give us life. The beautiful passage from Proverbs introduces us to Wisdom, said to be the first of God’s works, and from the beginning. We hear in this passage echoes of the Gospel of John, in which we know Jesus to be the Word of God, which existed from the beginning. We read in scripture about the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, and we know that God loves us so much that God became one of us, in God’s Son, who is both of God and in God from the beginning. Then, we are introduced to the Holy Spirit—again—who has been in the life-giving breath of God, and continues with us as our Advocate with God since Jesus’ death. We can know God in all these ways.

And we know God in the ways in which God *gives* to us. We sing different words to the Doxology than we used to, and in choosing words that don’t make God as Parent only a Father, we also celebrate our different relationships with God in God’s three persons—Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit; God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. To believe in God, to *belove* God is to know God in relationship and to love *who we become* in those relationships. We are created in love, we are redeemed in love, we are sustained in love. So may it be for us eternally.

Let us pray: Loving, holy God, help us to know you; help us to love you, and help us to introduce others to you so that we may all love each other and this world better. We pray in the names by which we know you, even as Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.