

1st Sunday after Pentecost

May 29, 2023-
June 4, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 28:16, 1 Corinthians 13:14

THEME: God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity

SONG: CW21 928 / CW93 326 – May the Grace of Christ
Our Savior

VISUAL: One large soft pretzel and shamrock (or pictures
of one) and a bag of small twisted pretzels to hand
out to students if possible

OBJECT LESSON

Show a large soft pretzel or picture. Ask, How many of you have eaten one of these? At many malls or county fairs, you can buy a warm buttery soft pretzel. They are great to share with friends as you break off pieces and dip in melted cheese. But did you know how this pretzel design was inspired? Monks in the middle ages handed pretzels out to students after they recited their prayers. See how the ends look like hands in prayer? They were also used to help describe the trinity of God. See the three spaces to show God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? If I share my pretzel with a friend, we are still eating the same pretzel.

BIBLE TRUTH

God spoke of himself as three persons in one God in the very first book of the bible as he said in Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image." God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit talked about creating us -man, perfect and free from trouble. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and ate of the forbidden fruit, God again promised to restore the perfectness of man through his own sacrifice, God the Son. God the Son, Jesus, was seen with a sign of the trinity at his baptism with the voice of God the Father proclaiming Jesus as his son and the Holy Spirit descending on him.

Through Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection, we are again assured of one day a life perfect and free from troubles in heaven with God as he first intended. Jesus urges us in Matthew 28:16 to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded."

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What are some of the truths that Jesus preached?
He loves us, forgives us, has a place in heaven for us, wants us to pray to him, wants us to tell others

Who do you know that you can share God's love and forgiveness?

We proudly proclaim with the monks of old, our belief in one God in three persons. We worship a God who is our perfect protector, provider Father, a God who is our Savior, friend and brother, a God who lives in our hearts as our comforter and peace-giver.

PRAYER

With the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:14 we pray, " May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with [us] all."

If possible, hand each student a small pretzel to eat after the devotion.



HEART IMPRINTS

2nd Sunday after Pentecost

June 5, 2023-
June 11, 2023

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 1:12, 2 Corinthians 12:8

THEME: The Holy Ministry is Filled with Sinners Called by God

SONG: CW21 738/ CW93 525 – The Son of God, Our Christ

VISUAL: Free weights, picture of a car

OBJECT LESSON

Ask a few children to lift a weight. Do you think that you could lift me? How about a car? There are many stories recorded of superhuman strength during times of crisis: A grandma lifts a car off her grandson, a 19 year-old daughter drags her dad and family from a fire. A 25 year-old pizza delivery man runs into a burning building to save four children. He goes back in to find a baby girl and jumps from the 2nd floor to bring her to safety.

BIBLE TRUTH

God is all-powerful. He uses weakness to show His power. It wouldn't be miraculous if we heard a story of a crane lifting a truck off a man or team of trained firefighters saving 5 children from a fire. Just the same, God uses sinful, weak people to further His purposes here on earth.

God used Moses, who complained about speech problems, to lead his people out of Egyptian slavery. He used Paul the Christian persecutor, to begin the spread of the Gospel to gentiles. He uses us, and sinful pastors and teachers, to help teach and preach the saving message to others.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:12 that it is Christ Jesus our God that gives the strength for service. Alone, we cannot accomplish service to our creator. He sent Jesus, the Son of God, as a show of his love, to live a perfect life in our place and suffer the punishment in our place, so that we can be made perfect in God's eyes. Because of Jesus, the Holy Spirit now lives in us to give us power as well.

Pick up the weight again. It may not be a show of physical strength but the power God gives us is superhuman, it is God's strength. For Paul again states that the Lord spoke these words in 2 Cor. 12:8 "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." v. 10 "for when [we] are weak, then [we] are strong," in God's power.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

We thank God for sending His Spirit to move us in superhuman ways to tell others of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. When we rely on ourselves to talk about Jesus, we sometimes get tongue-tied. To whom should we rely on to give us the words to speak? *God*

What message would you tell to a friend who is sad about a sin they committed? *God's forgiveness.*

What message would you tell a friend who thinks church is not important? *God wants us to come to him and have a relationship with him.*

PRAYER

Dear God the Father, there are many times we feel weak. Weak not knowing how to comfort a friend, weak not speaking up when someone says something contrary to God's will, weak in doing good. Please forgive us. We pray for your Spirit to give us strength and power to be of your service. We pray for your words in our mouths to speak your truth. We pray with confidence that you hear us because we are perfect and strong in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

3rd Sunday after Pentecost

June 12, 2023–
June 18, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:35–10:8

THEME: The Holy Ministry Demonstrates Compassion for God's People

SONG: CW21 736 – Lord, You Call Us as Your People

VISUAL: A rubber stamp, preferably one with the word “love”

OBJECT LESSON

Years ago in 1436, a German named Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. It was amazing technology because it allowed people to create multiple copies of newspapers, articles, flyers, and books, much like this stamp creates a copy of itself every time I put ink on it. Later, this invention made it possible for God's word, the Bible, to be printed in the language of the people. God used these copies to spread His word around the world.

BIBLE TRUTH

In the book of Matthew, we hear that even before the printing press or rubber stamps were invented, God used “copies” to spread his love and compassion, his word and salvation. Matthew 9:35 says that Jesus went around “proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” Jesus, the Son of God, walked along with compassion, healing and preaching.

God wants all people to know that their sins keep them from his gift of heaven. He preached repentance and sole reliance on his saving work on the cross. Jesus knew that soon his work on earth would be done and he would return to heaven. He put the Holy Spirit on his disciples to move them to “copy” his behavior, to have the power to heal the body and soul.

God puts his Spirit on his people today, too. At our baptism, we are given his Spirit and are made a son or daughter of God. His Spirit fills us with compassion for others as it says in 1 John 4:19, “we love because he first loved us.”

We have ministers that shepherd us with the Holy Spirit. In fact, their very title is a reflection of Jesus our Good Shepherd when we call our ministers of the Gospel, “pastors”. With the Holy Spirit all followers of Christ are compelled to spread the message of forgiveness to those around us each day.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

How are Christians like rubber stamps? *We show compassion and love. We tell of God's forgiveness through Jesus, the Son of God.*

Who gives us the power to “copy” the work of Jesus here on earth? *The Holy Spirit gives us the power to love and forgive and preach God's message.*

How can you show God's forgiveness to a friend or family member? *Maybe forgiving a friend/family member for saying or doing something mean.*

How can you show love to a stranger at the store? *Maybe helping them get something from the shelf, opening the door to the store, saying hello and being friendly.*

PRAYER

Thank you God for sending your son Jesus to live a perfect life for us, to show us your love and will. Thank you for putting your Spirit on us at baptism. We pray that more people will be moved by the Holy Spirit to enter the public ministry as pastors and teachers to help reflect the love of Christ and lead sinners into the healing of their souls. We pray that we too will copy Christ's behavior in our daily lives, spread forgiveness, peace, love, and joy. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

4th Sunday after Pentecost

June 19, 2023–
June 25, 2023

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:22–33

THEME: The Holy Ministry Preaches Christ Despite Persecution

SONG: CW21 823/ CW93 349– Jesus Priceless Treasure

VISUAL: Map of the world and your state or city

OBJECT LESSON

Show map of the world. OpenDoors.org is an organization dedicated to supporting persecuted Christians around the world and delivering the gospel materials. Persecution is by definition any hostility or ill-treatment. In 2023, where do you guess are the top 5 persecuted countries? Allow for any guesses. Number one is North Korea, 2: Somalia, 3: Yemen, 4: Eritrea, and 5: Libya. I have a map here of another place you could find persecution. Show the map of your state or city. Are you surprised?

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus was opposed during his lifetime by those who did not understand God's promise of a Savior or who did not think they needed a Savior. The same is true for us today. There are a lot of people in this world who hate Christians because they don't think they need Jesus. They don't think they are sinners who need a Savior.

That's a lot of people, since all people have a sinful nature and want to sin! Jesus gives us encouragement at the end of verse 22 "but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." How do we stand firm? Trust that Jesus completely saved us from sin and gave us heaven and then live a life dedicated to thanking him.

God gives us the 10 commandments as a curb, ruler, and guide. His commands are here because he loves us and wants us to enjoy life. Do not steal-because he doesn't want your stuff stolen. Do not murder-because he wants you to be safe. We follow the commands as Christians not to earn heaven, Jesus did that work already, but we follow his commands because God blesses us through them and it pleases God.

But in our life, in our school even, when we proclaim what God wants and show by our actions a life following God, people may persecute us, call us names, not play with us, or pick on us. Jesus tells us to keep on, to stand firm. Our

treasure of heaven is much greater and worth more and longer than one party, one recess, one school year.

In Matthew 5:11 Jesus states "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me." Later in the chapter, Jesus says we are the salt and light of the earth. When we walk away from a group gossip, when we befriend someone everyone else ignores, when we respect our parents, don't say bad words or watch inappropriate movies, some people will see us as weird, goody-two-shoes and be mean to us. But.. others, Jesus says, will see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven!

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What examples of persecution do you remember from God's word? *Israelites, Elijah, Paul, the disciples, etc.*

What examples of persecution for the faith could happen today? *Not invited to parties, name calling, etc.*

When we are persecuted, who can we turn to for help and strength? *God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus*

PRAYER

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for sending your son to live a perfect life, enduring the ultimate persecution on the cross for us. Send your Holy Spirit to give us the strength to stand firm in our faith, to live a life that pleases you and show others your love. Father, forgive us when we fall into following the crowd to avoid persecution. Be with us each day, Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS