

## Discipleship in the Lectionary – 06/12/2022



A look at the week's lectionary through the lens of discipleship and disciple-making.

**Trinity Sunday**

Revised Common Lectionary Year C

Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>

**John 16:12-15**

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### Trinity Sunday

Unlike other festivals in the church's liturgical calendar, Trinity Sunday centers on a doctrine of the church rather than a specific event. It celebrates the mystery of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In many ways Trinity Sunday reflects on the celebrations of the liturgical year to date: Christmas and Epiphany celebrating God taking on human flesh and dwelling among us; Easter celebrating Christ's death and resurrection; Pentecost celebrating the coming of God the Holy Spirit as our Advocate and Teacher.

The Trinity is fundamental to our faith. As Christians we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We affirm the Trinity when we recite the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed - both of which confess the triune nature of God and are organized in a Trinitarian structure. The triune God is the basis for our prayers as we pray to God the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. Our discipleship is grounded in the mighty acts of our triune God who is very much present and active in redeeming the world today.

### John 16:12-15

This year's Gospel lection for Trinity Sunday is from John's Gospel and is an excerpt from Jesus' Farewell Discourse (13:31-17:26). This text is the fifth and final discussion about the Holy Spirit in the Farewell Discourse (14:15-17; 14:25,26; 15:26,27; 16:7b-11 and 16:12-15).

*<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Jesus, the complete revelation of God (1:18; 14:9; 15:15), says to his remaining 11 disciples that He has still much to say but they will not be able to understand it right now (v.12). It may appear that there is more revelation to come and perhaps a contradiction to 15:15 but the next verse clarifies (v.13): The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of truth), when He comes, will be the one facilitating the understanding of all what Jesus has already revealed (and thus no new content). The Holy Spirit, like Jesus, is the revealer of God. The Spirit's work is clearly in the future tense (...will guide... will speak...will declare...).

There is continuity here between the Spirit and Jesus. Jesus revealed what He heard from God (8:26-28; 12:49; 14:10; 15:15; 17:7,8), the Spirit does not speak on His own authority, "*but whatever He hears He will speak*" (v.13). Verses 14 and 15 continue the connection between Jesus the revealer of God and the Spirit's function of revealing the truth about Jesus. The Spirit takes what belongs to Jesus and since what belongs to Jesus belongs to God, the ultimate source of the revelation of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit is God.

### Reflections

In these few verses from John the whole Trinity is on display. These verses also help us to understand the nature of Christianity relative to its past and future. Through Jesus, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was the full and complete revelation of God. It is through Christ that we declare our identity as Christians. The world has changed significantly since John's time and the world continues to change in our day. While Christ may no longer be visible in the flesh, the presence of the Holy Spirit among us and in us continues to help us to understand Christ's revelation of God. In other words, the Spirit helps us to understand the truth of what Jesus' original revelation means for us in our specific time and place.

On the first day of the week (Sunday), God began creation. On the first day of the week, God raised Jesus from the grave (Easter Sunday). On the first day of the week (Pentecost Sunday), the Holy Spirit descended on the newly born Church. On this Trinity Sunday we can reflect on the events of the liturgical year to date and celebrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity. As disciples we must also challenge ourselves to be open to being led by the Spirit into discerning newer and deeper understandings of what it means to be a Christ follower in our unique time and place. While confessional documents help to capture how the Holy Spirit influenced specific churches in previous times and places, such confessional documents cannot be a substitute for the Spirit's leading in the present.



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