



Message: ***The Circle of Life*** | May 31, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition ¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Be restored; listen to my appeal; agree with one another; live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. ¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 The Message ¹¹⁻¹³ And that's about it, friends. Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirits up. Think in harmony. Be agreeable. Do all that, and the God of love and peace will be with you for sure. Greet one another with a holy embrace. All the brothers and sisters here say hello.

Leader: *This is the Word of God for the people of God* **People:** *Thanks be to God*

The Circle of Life

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you”. It may seem a bit strange to begin a sermon with a benediction. So often we hear this scripture as a way to end any one of many different religious services. So...as much as you would probably like to hear me say at this point: amen...go in peace and be sure to get some cake... that is not what God has put on my heart to share with you today from our passage.

You see...today is a special day in our Christian year. It's Trinity Sunday. And to be honest...one of the hardest Sundays for a pastor to preach on. The trinity has typically been one of the most difficult concepts for people of our faith to grasp.

I had a gentleman come into one of the churches I served one day. He used to be a member of one of our former churches...he even told me that at one time...the church was going to pay for his seminary training. He then went on to tell me that that he joined a different church in town...the Mormon church...because he said...He just couldn't understand the holy Trinity. I give the guy some credit though...he was convicted in his belief...he even tried to recruit me to join the Mormon church with him.

I will agree with him on one thing from our conversation...The Trinity can be hard to understand. Our passage this morning though, is a good glimpse into the mystery of the trinity and provides a bit of a snapshot of God...the Three-in-One.

PAUSE

The Trinity is not an easy doctrine to comprehend. God is one, yet God is also three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The greatest minds of the church...ever since the resurrection, the ascension, and Pentecost have struggled to come up with a clear and concise explanation for the Trinity. St Augustine said this about the Trinity: “In no other subject is error more dangerous, nor inquiry more laborious, nor the discovery of the truth more profitable.”

Maybe the benediction in Paul's letter to the church in Corinth can give us a little insight. I'll share a few of the nuggets of understanding that I picked up from this passage.

PAUSE

When we use the language of the trinity...we are programmed to say it in a specific order. Father, son, holy ghost. I think it's interesting here...that Paul places the emphasis on Christ being first in the sequence. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.” In Paul's benediction, it's Christ who comes first.

Maybe this is what was important to Paul. Maybe as Christians...we place a lot of emphasis on Christ. At Back Roads Church, our mission is to help those who are lost find their place in God's plan of salvation. Christ is central to that mission. In all reality...our religious foundation is in the work that Emmanuel, Christ, God with us...did. It is Jesus Christ who reveals to us...the true nature of God.

If we look back through the pages of the Old Testament...the God you experience there has a reputation for being both awesome and at the same time...often terrifying. This is the God who can flatten mountains, open the sky, and cause floods that cover the earth and a God who shows his power through plagues, famine, and death.

PAUSE

When we look at the Trinity, we tend to see Christ first. After all...without Jesus Christ, God sometimes seems infinitely distant. As Christians...it's way more comfortable for us to hold on to Jesus who loves the kids, heals the sick, and understands that we are unable to follow the rules sent down from God himself. And...when we picture in our mind's eye God's own Son...staggering down the road to Golgotha with a cross on his back. We cannot deny that God himself was feeling the agony with Jesus. Agony that we deserve to feel. That picture is embedded in our mind.

SHORT PAUSE

That image is a vision of grace. It is a gift. We look at Jesus Christ and we know — don't ask us how, we just know — that "God so loved the world." God is the creator of the goodness that surrounds us every day...God is the author of the love that shines from those called to share in his mission. God and Jesus are one with the Holy Spirit working through us to make that grace known. The promise of God's grace is there for everyone. With the help of the trinity...we are being empowered and sent out to let others know.

Friends, understand this...Grace does not pretend that everything in life is all right. Grace shows us that it is all right for us to live, because God loves us, in spite of everything...even our sin. When we accept this...we won't become sinless...but we will want to sin less. And we will love more...

PAUSE

I read this story and I want to share it with you. God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit are working together all the time because they are one all the time.

It was during a time of war, two soldiers had to bury a friend who had just died. They went to the local Catholic priest and asked permission to bury their friend in the cemetery. The priest said he was sorry, but the man was a Protestant, and this was a Catholic only cemetery. He would have to be buried outside the fence.

The soldiers did as they were told. The next day they returned to pay their final respects. To their amazement, the grave was now inside the fence. They asked the priest about it. The old servant of God explained that he couldn't sleep. He kept thinking about that soldier outside the cemetery fence. He tossed and turned and finally he got up...he went out in the middle of the night...and moved the fence.

That's what the grace of God in Jesus Christ with the movement of the Holy Spirit is like. The fence is moved, to include even us!

Grace is not a tool that will ever make our dreams come true. It won't cure what ails us. Grace is not intended to bring us fame and fortune. Grace is a gift from a God who loves us enough to put on skin...Live and reveal himself through the life and ministry of Christ...and then be an ever-present guiding influence in each and every person to correct, direct and encourage each believer.

PAUSE

I want to close with this thought this morning. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit ..." Friends...these are probably some of the greatest words in all of scripture. Grace, love, and communion form a trinity of their own.

Historically, the church has always understood the Trinity as a triangle, but I wonder if this is the best image. A triangle is solid, squatty, fixed. I propose that maybe it would be easier to understand if we thought of the Trinity as a circle instead.

Like in a wedding service we share that the ring is a circle. It has no beginning no end. You can enter it at any point.

Think about this...how many of you went to church as a kid? How many of you didn't start your active participation in a relationship with Christ until a different point in your life? There may still be some here today who are still looking for their entry point. That is the circle of life.

When we do enter...some may find themselves relating more strongly to one person of the Trinity than to the other two. Some enter the circle because of a powerful, personal experience of grace, reconciled through Jesus Christ. Sin and forgiveness tend to draw us into the circle.

For others, it's the love of God that woos them in. Some Christians have grown up with the image of God as a stern taskmaster, but when they discover the truth of God's limitless love, it's a kind of conversion experience.

Still others see the impression of God in the life of the church community formed by the Holy Spirit. It is the new quality of life within the fellowship that calls them into deeper faith.

PAUSE

However, we may enter the circle of life, we open ourselves to the other ways of encountering God, and then...our spiritual life will be the richer for it! The Trinity is dynamic; and friends...we don't so much comprehend it...as much as we should try to become part of it.

A Christian blessing is powerful stuff. If the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, our lives will never be the same. If we have experienced the utterly self-giving love of God, our lives will never be the same. If the communion of the Holy Spirit characterizes our common life as a church, our lives will never be the same. Welcome to the circle of life.

To God be the glory, Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Friends, on Trinity Sunday we remember that we worship a God who is always giving. The Father creates, the Son redeems, and the Holy Spirit continues to guide, comfort, and empower the church even today. Grace, love, and communion are not just words we hear in a benediction — they are gifts we live in every day.

As we come to this time of offering, we do not give out of obligation or guilt. We give as people who have already received more than we could ever deserve. We give because the grace of Jesus Christ has moved the fence to include even us. We give because the love of God has welcomed us into the circle of life and faith. We give because the Holy Spirit continues to work through this church to bring hope, healing, and salvation to others.

So today, let us return a portion of what God has first entrusted to us, with grateful hearts and willing spirits.

Closing Prayer with Prayer of Dedication

Holy and Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank You for meeting us in this place today. Thank You for reminding us that Your grace is greater than our failures, Your love is deeper than our fears, and Your Spirit is still moving among Your people.

Lord, there are times when we struggle to fully understand the mystery of who You are, yet even in the mystery we see Your goodness. We see it in the cross of Christ. We see it in the gift of salvation. We see it in the fellowship of believers gathered together in Your name.

As we prepare to leave this place, continue shaping us into people who reflect Your grace, Your love, and Your presence in the world around us. Help us to move the fences that divide people. Help us to welcome others into the circle of faith with compassion, mercy, and truth.

And now, Lord, we dedicate these offerings back to You. Use them for the work of Your kingdom. May they become instruments of hope for the hurting, provision for those in need, and a witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Multiply these gifts and use this church as a living testimony to the power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working together as one.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction

As you leave this place today, remember that you do not walk alone. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ goes before you. The love of God surrounds you. And the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit remains within you.

Go now and live as people welcomed into the circle of God's life and love. Move the fences of division. Share the grace you have received. Love others as Christ has loved you.

And may the blessing of the Triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — be with you and remain with you always. Amen.