

John 16:12-15

16:12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

16:14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

16:15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Sermon: All That is Mine is Yours

A few months ago, we explored Luke's parable of the prodigal son(s). A younger son squanders his father's inheritance, but returns home to find his father's steadfast love and forgiveness. This son even receives a banquet. The older son, the one who was left to do all the hard work while his brother was away on an adventure, stands outside his father's house and stews. The father pleads with his son, "Please, please come back to the party. Don't you see? Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."

Would that each of us could live with such assurance! Would that each of us could believe in the reality the parable proclaims: Somewhere in this universe is a parental force who tells us, "All that is mine is yours. And that is enough!"

Seriously, think about the magnitude of the statement: “All that is mine is yours.”

Really? Are you sure? The older brother has a hard time seeing it. He has no robe and ring, no fatted calf, no banquet in his honor. And in this very moment, he isn’t interested in generalities, he’s interested in fairness. Tangible fairness. This older son wants his father’s sense of love and grace to be parceled out in the same manner as his inheritance. And in his anger, and in his jealousy, and his insistence on THIS world’s order, the son will not accept the truth of his father’s assurance. He sits outside the banquet, not yet ready to embrace all that his father offers.

In the telling of this and other parables, Jesus proclaims a truth: God’s kin-dom is not bound to this world’s constraints. Jesus told us that God’s love and God’s grace are enough. Enough. Enough, because they are neither exhaustible, nor exclusive. God’s love and God’s grace are limitless and accessible.

The Jesus of all four gospels, not to mention the ones we haven’t canonized, is the son willing to believe, wholly and fully, in the audacity of the father’s claim: “All that is mine is yours!”

It’s different for the disciples. They’re more like the son that still sits outside the banquet. It’s not that they are unfaithful or ungrateful people, nor is their love of God inauthentic. It’s not yet mature.

Like the older son, they still spend too much time focusing on God’s relationship with others, rather than God’s relationship with each of them. In their minds, the bigger God’s kingdom gets, the smaller their

piece of the pie. They are eager to cling to the possibilities of God's world, but not yet ready to give up the security of this world.

In today's pericope, we revisit the farewell discourse of Jesus in John's gospel. Jesus reminds the disciples that he has many things to tell them, but that they are not yet ready to bear them.

As readers of John's gospel, we, the modern hearers, have a distinct advantage the disciples do not: we've read John's prologue! And John's prologue spells it out: The Word, the wisdom quality of God, the substance that has been around since the very beginning, even before there was something to be conjured as a beginning, comes into the world in the person of Jesus. But the world does not recognize the source, and the world rejects the Word. But to all those who believe in the Word and receive him, is given the power to become children of God.

Jesus knows what's coming. A trial. And death. And resurrection. And eventually, generations of believers who will pick up where he leaves off.

Still, Jesus is equipped. Jesus is filled with what John calls the Spirit of truth. I'm mixing my gospel metaphors today, so forgive me, and please feel free to send any complaints to my homiletics professor. But it seems to me that this Spirit, or this agent, that Jesus has, allows him to embrace the audacity of the Father's claim: "All that is mine is yours."

Somehow, somehow, John tells us that Jesus understands the vastness of God's love. And this understanding gives him a courage and a capacity to declare what Stanley Saunders calls a bankruptcy, from any

dependence on worldly powers. Jesus will reject social, political, economic, and religious norms because he knows the Father's love is enough. And Jesus knows that nothing, not height, nor depth, nor powers, nor even death, will separate him from such love.

Jesus tells the disciples: "When the Spirit of truth comes (that same Spirit that's in me!), They will guide you into all the truth you need to know."

And here's my favorite part:

The Spirit of truth will glorify me, because They will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Did you hear that? The love of God. The goodness of God. The capacity to embrace such love and goodness. These are not exclusive to Jesus. They are accessible to everyone. And the events that will soon unfold, will demonstrate this truth, now and forever more.

But not yet. The disciples are not yet ready to bear these things. But soon, they'll be equipped.

When I read this text, it stirs up memories of knowledge I could not yet bear as a child, knowledge I was not yet ready to hear:

- How can my mamma and daddy say they love me equally when they spent \$60 on my brother's high-tops and \$56 on mine?
- Seriously, will I ever use Algebra?
- How come I didn't get picked?

Yes, these are silly anecdotes. But as I mature, I understand that parental love is not about acquiring things, but rather a knowledge that someone, no matter what, will offer me support and encouragement and safe harbor. And every time I grocery shop, or try to determine how late I'm gonna be to my next appointment, I'm grateful for teachers who taught me how to do algebra in my head. And every time I don't get picked for something or invited to the dance, I understand it's not the end of the world, because subjective things do not determine my worth.

The disciples were not yet ready to understand, but Jesus tells them that something's coming. Years later, a decade, two decades, perhaps three or four, when the disciples have become old men, and tell the stories to their children and grandchildren, I wonder if this is a lecture they remember fondly. "Jesus said we weren't ready, and he was right! But sure enough, one day, we understood. And sure enough, one day, you will, too!"

Today is Trinity Sunday. And I'll be honest with you. I have no interest in proving the merits of three-in-one, or spending a few hours debating what metaphors we should assign to this three-legged stool. I don't believe that's what today about. I believe that is a celebration of an unexplainable, but undeniable truth: Somewhere in this universe is a parental force who tells us, "All that is mine is yours."

God says to the son who wanders: "All that is mine is yours!"

God says to the son who struggles to come back into the banquet: "All that is mine is yours!"

God says to a Galilean peasant: “All that is mine is yours!”

And God says to each of us: “All that is mine is yours!”

It’s a divine mystery to explain how this is so. Call it what you will: one, three-in-one, three hundred-in-one, three thousand-in-one, three million-in-one. No matter.

But respond in gratitude:

Thanks be to the God who is always with us.

Thanks be to the God who tells us “All that is mine is yours!”

Thanks be to the God who is a wonderful mystery.

I want to close with a final thought. Our one-two punch of Pentecost, the arrival of the Holy Spirit, and Trinity Sunday, a day when we seek to name a mystery beyond naming, emphasize lesser-known expressions of God, but I believe no less profound expressions. I’m reminded that in Genesis, the very first thing we hear is that everybody and everything are made in the image of God. It seems to me, that like God, and particularly the God made known in Spirit and Trinity, all of humanity, indeed all of creation, should also be expressed in terms that are fluid, mysterious, and vast.

We live in a world that too often clings to rigid and binary definitions. What might the vastness of the Trinity teach us about the vastness of being human? Or Christian? Or American? Or a parent? Or a partner? Or today, more than ever, a neighbor? Who neighbors are and what it means to be a neighbor. We aren’t so arrogant as to believe we can

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Bob Stillerman
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confine God to a box. Why then would we choose to confine God's creation to one? Love, by its very definition, or lack of definition, is unbounded. And man, that's what makes it so great! Perhaps we should let love grab a hold of us, instead of being so insistent on us grabbing a hold on love. And swept up in the deep and mysterious love of God, maybe, finally, finally, finally, we can live into that great commandment we covenant toward each week: Love God and Neighbor as thyself.

Amen.