

June 4, 2023: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **First Sunday after Pentecost**~

Trinity Sunday and Communion Sunday

"We are blessed with God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

Our services can be found on our website at www.barrechurch.com

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28 v 16 - 20

1. Introduction:

In life we always learn and grow as people. We learn at home from our families and / or loved ones, our friends, and all others whom we encounter on our journeys. Whenever we think about some experience or skill or knowledge we acquired, such as playing guitar, basketball, or farming, or an old pie recipe, we are reminded of someone or people whom we gained that experience or skill from. We are connected to that past encounter or experience, and the people involved, as we move forward. It is wonderful to think about life in this way, because we give honor to those whom we learn from, and we acknowledge them and the gifts they give to us and others. Those are the ones who have played an important role in shaping us into the human beings we are.

2. The Great Commission:

When Jesus instructed the women after His resurrection, to go and tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee, we see an important development here, one being a geographical shift, from leaving Jerusalem, and going back to Galilee where He started His ministry. We also see Him revealing Himself in a way they had not seen or experienced Him before. First, they were still in awe of Him being resurrected, and probably feeling embarrassed and in pain because of their deserting Him during the worst time of His life. One can only imagine their conversations on their way to Galilee about what happened, their own role in not protecting Him enough, His horrific death, then resurrection, and now what does He want to say to them? What can they expect from meeting Him again?

At the sight of their Messiah, the disciples worshipped Him, and some doubted, for various reasons, obviously. One crucial aspect of the essence of Jesus' Being, His ministry and message and His presence among His disciples, is the importance of forgiveness and embracing of humanity, despite their sinful nature. Jesus meets the disciples in the hills of Galilee with an open heart and with words of confidence and purpose. He came to them and restored their broken relationship. He speaks to them, declaring His status as One to whom all authority in heaven and earth had been given to. He is no longer the defeated One on the cross. He had been restored and given the Kingship from God. It is from this position of Divine power that He speaks to them now.

The words that follow have to do with a mission that would have far-reaching consequences during their time and beyond. They are commissioned to make disciples of all nations. This would involve everyone beyond the land they were traveling in, and beyond the Jewish people. It would include all people, just the way Christ would want it, and the way He lived His life, to be inclusive of all people. They were authorized to spread the word of Christ, make disciples, and baptize them, in the Name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They were to teach their new disciples to listen and obey everything He commanded them to do, that is to follow Jesus' way of life, which was the fulfilment of the Old Testament laws, not in a legalistic way, but in a discerning way of discovering the will of God for them. It would also be the commandments of loving God, and neighbor as themselves.

In this commissioning Jesus is now declaring Who He truly is, which is being part of the Holiest of Beings, and forming part of the Trinitarian existence with God and the Holy Spirit. This declaration makes Him therefore God on earth, with full authority to send them out with this powerful message.

3. Conclusion: We are blessed with God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

While we are connected to all those who have taught us many things in life, we can now as children of God, have a deeper appreciation for the life of Christ on earth, and His impact on those ordinary disciples then, and on us now. He is more than just the person who walked with His disciples and the crowds. He built relationships with them, and showed them how

to be a Christ disciple, how to preach and teach the word of God and to develop a deep spiritual relationship with God themselves. He also revealed the special relationship He had with God and the Holy Spirit. The same Christ is connected to us, impacting us daily, blessing us with the Divine presence, guiding us, and teaching us as we navigate our lives, searching for meaning and hope, and leading the way to the fulfilment of our journeys on earth. May God help us to show and teach others this love of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit for the whole world. Amen.