

“Trinitarian Life”
by Rev. Frances Savill
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Trinity Sunday

Romans 8:9-25

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome, has been trying to show and describe what our lives of faith are like.

As I was reading and preparing for this morning, I came across a translation of John 3:16 from Dallas Willard: *"God's care for humanity was so great that God sent his unique Son among us, so that those who count on Jesus might not lead a futile and failing existence but have the undying life of God himself."* (Divine Conspiracy p. 1)

Back in chapter 5 of Romans, Paul began by saying that we were justified through faith in Christ, and so had peace with God.

Through Jesus, we had entered into what God had wanted to do for us, make us fit for himself. Then in the following chapters Paul talked about our old lives of sin and death, and our new lives in Christ. That new life in Christ is the same as the "undying life of God Himself" that Willard describes as the gift of God described in John 3:16

Paul talked about how we have been set free, released from the power of sin, all that breaks and destroys us is destroyed, and that God is our new leader. We have changed allegiances and now present ourselves to God. Our service to God brings us true freedom and we are set free to be our best selves as God's beloved children, learning to live the undying life of God the Father and Jesus the Son.

Paul urged the Roman Christians to focus less on their own ability to make themselves righteous by following the laws, and instead to put on the righteousness of Christ, embracing what the Spirit of God was doing in them.

In Chapter 8, Paul continues to teach the people how to live this faith life well, and how to understand their lives, their new standing before God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. To paraphrase Paul's words:

Obsession with self is a dead end; attention to God leads out into the open, into a spacious free life. God, who raised Jesus from the dead, moved into your life, he'll do the same in you as he did in Jesus, bring you alive to himself.

I see the truth of those words every day, especially in prayer. When I fix my eyes on myself, and my situation, it is very often discouraging, and there is often little hope.

But as soon as I lift up my eyes to God, to the work of Jesus and the Spirit in me and in the world, then everything changes, hope abounds, there is an endless number of things to give thanks for.

As I approach my "to do" list for the day, any day, if I think about myself and what I am getting from it, the joy drains out like water out of a sieve, but when I wonder what God might do, when I seek God's face, and trust God goes ahead of me and with me, and that God might be doing something, again whatever the activity I find it strangely life-giving.

And then Paul continues:

THEREFORE... which is where we start in verse 12.

Therefore, brothers and sisters we have an obligation to live new lives of adoption and adventure, as heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, trusting that God will work in us as he worked in Jesus.

Paul invites us to live this day trusting that what God is about in our lives is bringing us alive to himself.

Consider for a moment Jesus' life and character. Jesus was and is a joyous, creative person. Jesus is and was one with the Father. Jesus does not allow us to continue thinking of our Father God who fills and overflows space as a morose and miserable monarch, a frustrated and petty parent, or a policeman on the prowl. (Divine Conspiracy p. 64)

Consider the creation, from aardvarks to antelopes, from the stars at night to starfish on the beach we have an amazing Creator, who filled this world with creative abundance, beauty and joy.

This good and great Creator loves us, and His "care for us was so great that he sent his unique Son among us, so that those who count on Jesus might not lead a futile and failing existence, but have the undying life of God himself."

That unique Son, sent us the Holy Spirit so that we might be clothed in Christ before God the Father, and know that we are heirs, adopted children. C.S. Lewis said "there are no ordinary people. You have never met a mere mortal."

We are immortals, and clothed in Christ, we are becoming something he described as "everlasting splendours."

So we can trust God to treat us as beloved children, moving us towards him, towards life, towards being holy as He is holy, fitting us for Himself, moving us towards being everlasting splendors.

So, if this day holds joy and comfort, success and rest, it is to move us toward life in the Father. If this day holds struggles, pain, suffering, and difficulties it is also to move us toward life in the Father.

Looking to the future, the good and the difficult is all of one purpose, all of a kind, for God works in us as he worked in his beloved Son, Jesus. So we can live with an expectant joy, a hopeful anticipation, a "what adventures next?" kind of attitude.

We can live without fear, not that there won't be hard moments, or painful struggles. But all things are leading us in the same direction – life – eternal, living in the Son.

So, says Paul, it's a little like being pregnant.

The struggles we go through are worth it, and they are not to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. What is being born in all of us is new life, eternal living. It is the work of God in us day by day, but not only us, all creation waits in joyful anticipation for full redemption.

This present time, Paul describes as labour pains. It is pain with a purpose. It is pain that will end, and at the end of it there will be living to the full.

Labour pains are a bit unpredictable. It's impossible to know ahead of time how long they'll last, or how severe or easy they will be. The purpose of labour pains is very clear, though you can certainly forget the purpose in the midst of the pain, they move towards birth – new life.

Today is Trinity Sunday where we celebrate and give thanks to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for God's work in us and in our world.

God is moving in us and in all creation, bringing us to new life, bringing us towards himself, bringing to completion in us what he started.

God is acting in us, dealing with us as he did in Jesus his beloved Son. God does this as we orient ourselves as followers and apprentices of Jesus. The Holy Spirit guides us, helps us, and draws us into the very life of the Triune God.

So this day is part of the great adventure, what will it hold, we wait and watch in anticipation, expectation, joyful patience.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer: God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we look to You, we watch with anticipation, expectation and joyful patience, trusting in You, trusting in your goodness and steadfast love, trusting in your work in all of us, in your church and in this world, through Jesus our Lord, Amen.