

**Theme: “I Believe...”**

- 1. In God the Father**
- 2. In God the Son**
- 3. In God the Holy Spirit**

**Matthew 28:16-20 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

"I believe..." We human beings believe a lot of things. Some of them are true. Some of the things we believe might be the furthest thing from the truth. Belief can be a very powerful thing. A person, or a company, or a team that believes that they can accomplish their goals can often do some amazing things—even above and beyond what might be expected. Those of you who are Bay Area sports fans might remember one of the most beloved sports teams in Bay Area history had as their team slogan: "We Believe!" The 2007 Golden State Warriors accomplished a huge and unexpected upset in the first round of the playoffs over the heavily-favored Dallas Mavericks.

But belief in one's self, belief in your company or your co-workers, or your teammates can only take you so far. The person who has the utmost belief in their abilities and skills is sometimes not hired for the dream job they applied for, or falls short of accomplishing their ultimate goal. The company that believes in itself and its vision sometimes fails and goes bankrupt. That beloved Warriors team back in 2007 didn't win the NBA Championship that year. No, after their big upset win they were eliminated in the very next round of the playoffs.

These are good reminders that as important as it is to believe, it is much more important what we believe and whom we believe in. What better time to remember Who it is that we believe in than on Trinity Sunday! This amazing, three-in-one, unfathomable God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the one true God that exists. It is this God whom we put our trust in as we confess each Sunday, "**I believe...**"

**1. In God the Father, 2. In God the Son, 3. In God the Holy Spirit.**

**1. "I believe...in God the Father."**

Think of what it means that we call God our Father. He is our Father because He created us and all things. As we read in our Old Testament reading the Bible begins by telling us that God the Father is the Creator of this universe, "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth**" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible also tells us very clearly that God the Father is still the preserver of all things. Psalm 145:15-16 tell us, "**The eyes of all look expectantly to You [God], And You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.**"

But God is also our Father in a more important way than just physically creating us and bringing us to life. He has made us His own children through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians, "**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**" (Galatians 3:26). If we are "**sons of God**" then that means we are heirs of God, and the inheritance we have waiting for us is God's kingdom of heaven!

With God as our Father, do we have anything to fear? Is there anything that we truly need to worry about? No! Again, the Apostle Paul writes, "**For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'**" (Romans 8:15). We can

cast all our cares and fears on Him; we can place our lives into His strong hands; and we can pray to Him *“as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father,”* as Martin Luther explained it in his Catechism.

## 2. “I believe...in God the Son.”

Think of how important it is, and what a blessing it is that we believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ. Not just believe that He lived on this earth as a man, but that He is also true God. Notice in our text for today that Jesus claims this for Himself—and does so with at least three statements in these 5 short verses.

First of all, He said, **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (v. 18)**. Only God can claim that type of authority. How did Jesus prove that He had this authority? Well, He was standing there talking to them wasn’t He? Remember just a short time before this Jesus had been brutally crucified on a cross and buried in a tomb—dead! Yet, three days later He rose from the dead, as He had predicted, and if that wasn’t enough, not long after He said these words from our text He ascended into heaven.

Secondly, in His command to baptize in the name of God, notice that He includes Himself (as well as the Holy Spirit): **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (v. 19)**. Why would Jesus give the command to **“make disciples”** by **“baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** if they weren’t all three one God? Would it make any sense for Jesus to command us to baptize in the name of anyone other than God Himself? How could anyone but God Himself give us the benefits of forgiveness and faith that are found in baptism?

Thirdly, Jesus concludes His words to His disciples, and us, with this promise: **“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (v. 20)**. Only God can be everywhere with each one of us until the end of time (**“the end of the age”**), and Jesus says He will do exactly that. Again, what a great comfort and blessing to know and believe that the One who came down from heaven to be our brother, to live a perfect life among us and for us, to die to forgive us, and rise again to give us eternal life is the one who will be with us always!

## 3. “I believe...in God the Holy Spirit.”

Why is it such a blessing and so important to believe in the Holy Spirit? Well, without the Holy Spirit and His work in our hearts we wouldn’t be able to say with a genuine, living heart of faith **“I believe...in God the Father, in God the Son, in God the Holy Spirit!”** The Bible tells us that **“no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3)**. The Holy Spirit is the one who made us children of God by bringing us to faith through the Word of God. We read again words from Romans chapter 8: **“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:14-16)**.

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter, our **“Helper,”** the **“Spirit of truth”** who **“will guide [us] into all truth” (John 16:7, 13)**, as Jesus promised. He is the One who opens our hearts and minds through the Word of God to know God and to know that when we open our mouths each Sunday to confess **“I believe...”** what we are believing is actually the truth!

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is the name you have been baptized into. That is the name of the one true God who saved you from sin, death, and hell. The Triune God is our God; the God who loves us and still promises that He is **“with [us] always, even to the end of the age” (v. 20)**. By His grace may He always lead us to say with full confidence and faith those blessed words, **“I believe!”** Amen.