

The Holy Trinity – 2025
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31
Acts 2:14a, 22-36
John 8:48-59

I AM. Moses asked God for God's name. Moses needed to know. Moses was going to a people to whom he wasn't intimately connected. God had given Moses a job to do, a big job. Moses wasn't going on his own authority. Imagine being told that you were the one to deliver a mass of humanity out of bondage, out of slavery. Imagine being told that you were going to be the one to confront the most powerful man in the known world – a cruel, tyrannical, uncompromising despot. Moses wanted to know who was sending him. Moses asked for God's name. "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say to the people of Israel, I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14). In Hebrew it is pronounced Yahweh. I AM.

God revealed Himself to Israel. By way of ten plagues, by way of lamb's blood smeared around the doors of His people, by way of a sea that opened miraculously – God revealed Himself to the Israelites. By way of their deliverance from death, by way of their Exodus from Egypt, by way of their entrance into the Promised Land – God revealed Himself to His people. I AM. I AM WHO I AM is the One who created the heavens and the earth. He is the One who created man in His own image. I AM is the author of life, the progenitor of truth and reality and love. I AM WHO I AM is the holder of all wisdom, all time and all that is good. Are you fond of reality? When you confess the words of the creed, are you confessing reality? Have you ever taken a vacation from reality? The tenth plague was the plague of death. Death was a grim reality. God revealed Himself, manifested His glory to Pharaoh, as death swept through Egypt. Let my people go! I'm of the mind that reality has the last word. For us, it is a very good word.

Humanity has no shortage of people who want to fabricate for themselves a false reality. At times, all of us have fallen into that trap. A mirage of other people's making or us twisting right and wrong to soothe our guilt – we have fallen into other's traps, and we've made plenty of our own. When Pontius Pilate absolved himself of Jesus' blood, he publicly washed his hands in an empty gesture of innocence. That self-absolution was not reality, and he knew it. It was just a pretend gesture for himself and others. Jesus is God's revelation and He came to His own and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). Why? Why did His own not receive Him? The Lord Christ said this: "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death" (John 8:51). Has anyone, ever, made a promise like that to you? Jesus was in a verbal confrontation with those who had fabricated for themselves a false reality. It was testy, this confrontation. It was heated. It was full of impotent angst and rage. "The Jews answered him, 'Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?'" (John 8:48). It happened over and over – Jesus' antagonists accusing Him of being possessed (John 7:20), of being insane (John 10:20), of being an agent of Beelzebul (Matthew 12:24). Ultimately, they spit on I AM, they put a crown of thorns on I AM, and they crucified I AM.

It's Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to all you men-folk. Fathers are to behave honorably. Fathers are to be honored. It is very difficult for a child who has been abused in any way by his or her father to see true masculinity in a favorable light. It is a sad thing that the most treasured vocation that God has given us, to be a parent, would be soiled by ill behavior. All of us have a

Father, a true Father, an eternal and giving and righteous and devoted Father. He loves us. He perpetually acts in our best interest. He gives us all that we need for this body and life. He teaches us. He protects us. He is to be honored. Jesus honored His Father. The only-begotten Son kept the Fourth Commandment – Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother. The Love between God the Father and God the Son is reality. That love informs your life. That love, their love, is the love that animates your faith, animates your heart and soul.

Jesus was unapologetic: “I honor my Father, and you dishonor me” (John 8:49). What is the implication? Those who attacked Jesus claimed I AM as their God. And yet, they dishonor I AM in the flesh, they blaspheme the One who is God in the flesh. The implication is that I AM is *not* their God. Abraham was righteous by faith (Romans 4:3). So says the Scripture. The thing that makes you righteous made Abraham righteous. Abraham saw God’s righteousness from afar (Abraham lived 2000 years before Christ), but he saw it clearly (John 8:56). The Lord will provide. That’s what Abraham said to Isaac as they trudged up a mountain. Isaac was wondering where the sacrifice was. Isaac saw the knife, saw the wood, saw the fire but young Isaac didn’t see the sacrifice. I AM had told Abraham: “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Genesis 22:2). Abraham had faith. Abraham obeyed. His was next level trust. I am ashamed of my pitiful trust in light of Abraham. I AM *never intended* to have Isaac offered as a sacrifice. God was teaching us all about reality. Reality, the sweetest and most wondrous and loving Fatherly truth is that God Himself gave His Son, His only Son, and offered Him on a cross to deliver us from sin and death. God stayed Abraham’s hand. A ram was caught by its horns in the thicket and *that* was the sacrifice which Abraham offered (Genesis 22:13).

We honor our Father by honoring His Son. We honor our Father by keeping Christ’s words close to our hearts. We honor our Father by acting on His commands. We are fond of reality. Reality is a great blessing. To come to the Divine Service on Sunday mornings and receive God’s gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation is to align ourselves with reality just as much as assenting to the truth that the chemical formula for water is H₂O. Reality and truth shine brightly in this holy house. I AM is present to share His life with us. By virtue of receiving His Word, you become in tune with I AM. Apart from Him, the pieces of life will not fit together cohesively. One courts frustration and emptiness and confusion by distancing oneself from I AM. We will honor our Father. We will defend the weak, the unborn, and the vulnerable. We will speak the truth in love. We will forgive as we have been forgiven. We will walk humbly with our God. We will embrace the Gospel, embrace Christ’s church, embrace our fellow believer.

Jesus said: “It is my Father who glorifies me” (John 8:54). Do you know how the Father glorified the Son? When you think of Jesus’ glory, what do you think of? The Lord was troubled in His spirit. He was painfully aware of His approaching passion. Jesus knew the scope of His suffering – that He would bear an untold measure of sin and that that sin would be punished. He saw it coming. He knew it was coming. And I AM called out in anticipation to I AM: “Father, glorify your name” (John 12:28). Jesus was asking His Father to crucify Him. That’s where the Son is glorified – on the cross. On the cross the Son of God was lifted up and exalted. On the cross He draws all men unto Himself. On the cross love becomes visible, real. I AM WHO I AM. “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Christ crucified is reality. ‘The Lord will

provide' is reality. Your sins are forgiven is reality. Jesus rose from the dead. We are His workmanship. God's glory invades this place as His Word is preached and His sacraments are celebrated. All of that is reality and it is glorious. Those who have died in Christ are in heaven. Death has no sting. Jesus gives us His true body to eat and His true blood to drink. All of that is reality and it is glorious. We are rather fond of reality because we are rather fond of I AM – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God. Reality has the last word. The last word is "It is finished." The last word is Resurrection. The last word is "I am coming soon."