**The Father Gives His Son**

Based on [John 3:1-17](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn3.1-17)

Preached on June 16, 2019

The Holy Trinity

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Today’s gospel lesson applies very well to this Sunday, both liturgically and with respect to our society at large. Liturgically, it is Trinity Sunday; the day that the church has for centuries—we can almost even say for “millennia”—taken time to honor the theological fact of the Trinity. And two of the Trinity are designated as Father and Son. Today’s Gospel famously reads, “**God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.**” The one true God is called Father because he has a Son who is also the one True God. This family relationship within the Godhead is essential to our understanding of the Trinity, this Trinity Sunday and every day that we worship our One God in spirit and truth.

But it is also Father’s Day. This doesn’t always align with Trinity Sunday. But it does this year and so we can consider how fitting it is. This year, Father’s day is when we hear in the Gospel about the Father offering up his Son for the life of the world. You might think that this was not a very Fatherly thing to do. But you would be wrong.

Jesus himself says that the day that his Father lifted him up on the cross, would be the day his Father glorified Him. And this is a uniquely Fatherly thing to do. It’s not a motherly thing to do. Simeon told Mary, when prophesying about the baby Jesus, that “a sword will pierce your own soul too.” But we don’t hear of the Father suffering in that way. We assume it grieves him, but nowhere in Scripture does it say so.

God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac, and Abraham was willing, and we don’t read anywhere that Abraham’s soul was pierced by the command, or that Isaac felt fear and betrayal. By all accounts, both Father and Son were willing and dutiful. But…could you imagine the story if God had told Sarah, a mother, to go up on the mountain and kill her son?

Father’s glorify their Sons by raising them to be willing to show their love in suffering for another, and expecting fellow men to do likewise. And so I want you to hear these words again, words that many of you may have heard and considered more than any other verse in scripture. “**For God so loved the world that he gave his Son**.” “Gave” is simply a euphemism for sacrificed.

Scripture doesn’t say that the Father’s “soul was pierced” when he sacrificed his Son. But it does say that God shows his love of the world and love of you by being willing to sacrifice his son. John 3:16 is one. Here’s another one: “**He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**” (Romans 8:32).

God the Father gave his Son for the life of the world. In this way he shows us his love, and glorifies his son. There are many fathers who sacrifice their sons out of pure selfishness. I heard a horrible story two weeks ago about a young son, pre-teen whose estranged father called him after his birthday. The son was so happy. The Father called a few more times, but then stopped and ran off again. It turns out, the Father had talked the son into opening an account at the bank and making his Father co-administrator. The son put all of his birthday money in the bank account and the next day, the money was gone, and so was his dad. Let’s be clear, that’s not a father. A Father wants more for his son than he does for himself, and to lose his son is met with the same duty as laying down his own life.

And so it is that the Father offered up his Son on the cross. In so doing the Father gave his Son a name that is above every name. **Now, at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and tongue confess that he Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father who glorifies his Son.** We pray to the Father, and the Father loves us, but he loves us through the Son. And we who have seen the Son have seen the Father. Jesus Christ is in all, above all, through all. **Without Christ, we have no heavenly Father; but with him we have union with God in whom the fullness of God doth dwell.** Yes the Father sacrificed the son, but the Son embraced the cross, scorning the shame, for the joy that His Father thus set before him.

Lately, Satan’s attacks have been culturally aimed at fatherhood. It teachs women they don’t need husbands to be their head, and it teaches fathers to be like mothers. **And so Eve hands Adam the fruit again full circle…and he takes it. Have we learned nothing?** The world hasn’t. The world refuses instruction from anyone but her prince, and so now we are a fatherless culture, and a fatherless culture has no idea what it means to have God as their Father.

But you are the church who has been washed in the forgiveness of sins, regenerated in the Holy Spirit, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and presented as his flawless bride to His heavenly Father. He is your Father and gives you away to the bridegroom who is the Son. Let men be men, let Fathers be Fathers, who raise their sons in the way they should go, and send them into the world with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God…to die for the world to live, even as Christ died for you.

---Athanasian Creed p. 319