



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

June 7, 2009

## Trinity Sunday

When my children James and Rachel were little one of my most favorite parts of the day was to read to them before they went to sleep. After the bath and on with the jammies we would snuggle down and read their choice of favorite story.

One night I was reading to Rachel and she said in a very serious, 3 year old, voice, dad. I said what. She said I know a secret. I said really. She said yes James and I have got you a new screwdriver for father's day and it's a secret. I just squeezed her a little tighter and said that's good. But my smile was probably as wide as the river.

How innocent at 3 years old to have a secret. The childhood innocence's of life's secrets.

You know If only it were to stay that way. Because as we get older we begin to have more and more secrets.

Now some secrets are good secrets like surprise parties of which 98% of you sat here today should feel shamefully guilty about. I told you I would preach about you and this is it!!!! You are just bad bad bad.

Yet secrets like surprise parties and gifts are good secrets and they warm the heart with excitement and anticipation.

But then there are those other secrets that do not warm the hearts. Those things that in our past still make us feel embarrassed, ashamed or even guilty about.

You know things done that we should not have done. Things we had not done but should have done.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*Established in 1847*

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The things said that we wish we had not said. The things unsaid that we wish we had said them.

Its those times in our life that we are so ashamed or embarrassed or guilty about that we have locked them away in that section of our heart that says not to be opened. The part of our heart that is the containment area for all those things we would rather other people did not know about us.

Today is Trinity Sunday and this year in our readings we do not have the glimpses of heaven and the holy holy holy of the cherubim seraphim and the angelic host. Today we read about Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night. You know usually when somebody does something by night it sometimes has a not so good motive. Nicodemus came by night because he wanted to come to Jesus in secret. He did not want to be seen nor have people know that he visited with this little upstart from Nazareth who had told people that god actually loved them.

And Nicodemus came by night and came in secret, and he brought with him his secrets. Both the good and the not so good.

What is so human about Nicodemus is that in talking with Jesus he begins the conversation with flattery. O Jesus you are so good and wonderful and so on. And Jesus says lets just get to the heart of the matter which for Jesus is the matter of the heart.

The place where the secrets are kept. Especially the ones that are not so good, because it is those that are eating your lunch, taking a lot of your energy to deal with, and in your embarrassment and in your shame and in your guilt, you think that you are now unforgivable and maybe not worthy of the love of god. It is those darkest times

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and darkest parts of your life is why Jesus said I am the light of the world because the light only shines in darkness. Jesus said I know your secrets, all of them, and I am here to take the not so good from you and free you of the shame embarrassment and guilt and hurt and let you live freely.

You know every time we meet for worship the first prayer of our liturgy says almighty god to you all hearts are open all desires known and from you NO SECRETS ARE HIDDEN. None.

That is the invitation of Christ to let him first love you as you are and then say lets take a look at the little place in your heart that is locked away with the secrets we are not so proud of. What Jesus does is bring them to light and then forgives them, frees us from the guilt. Absolutely.

You see Trinity Sunday is not only about heavenly things it is the assurance of gods kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, and gods kingdom has not much to do with places or visions, but it has to do with the heart. Especially where we keep all those secrets locked away. In fear, in darkness, in nighttime.

One of Nicodemus questions to Jesus when talking about this new birth, this new life, was how can this happen. I think there was a deeper question of Nicodemus and his question was can this happen to me. I believe all of us come to Jesus with the secrets of our hearts and ask can this happen to me? I believe Jesus just squeezes us a little tighter and smiles with the knowledge that we had better believe it can.

Amen.

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