

Triple-decker Blessings Flow from Our Triune God

I. Grace

II. Love

III. Fellowship

Introduction: Let's start with a big scoop of the creamiest, sweetest, premium, vanilla ice cream that we can find. Then let's pour on some hot fudge. How about another scoop of that premium ice cream, then a layer of butterscotch? And then, oh well, it's summer we can walk it off later, how about one more scoop of ice cream and some caramel? Then let's top it off with whipped cream, pecans pieces, and a cherry, oh, and a little more hot fudge. O.K. we have a triple-decker ice cream treat that's just right for beautiful day in the northwoods. Sounds good, huh?

That's nothing compared to the triple-decker which God serves up for us today. Think of that triple-decker ice cream treat, then consider the triple blessings from our Triune God which the Apostle Paul talks about in our text.

God starts with the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Then he pours on a second layer of the love of God. God piles on the third layer of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And finally God tops it off by telling you and me about these blessings, giving them to us, and keeping us in these blessings throughout our lives all the way into eternal life.

Today, let us listen to God's Word and apply it to our hearts. This Trinity Sunday weekend we hear that Triple-decker Blessings Flow from Our Triune God. Grace flows from our Lord, Jesus Christ, Love flows from God the Father, and Fellowship flows from the Holy Spirit.

I. Grace

Our text is the Apostle Paul's closing remarks in his divinely-inspired, second letter to the Corinthians. The congregation in Corinth was experiencing anything but smooth sailing. They were enduring the rough waters of division in their church. The devil had divided the Corinthians with his favorite weapon - sin. The Corinthians were losing sight of God's blessings and the unity which Christian brothers and sisters enjoy because of their common faith in the Triune God.

In contrast, consider our congregation, or if you are a visitor, think about your home congregation. We are enjoying the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. Things are going more-or-less smoothly. No worries. Our church isn't like this church in the ancient city of Corinth, right?

Well, the Church in Corinth was made up of sinners who fell into temptation from time to time. The church in Corinth was experiencing trouble because of those sins. Sound familiar?

Look at our church or your home church. Are there sinners

in our church? Don't look around, look right here. Yes, we confess we have sinned. Have we even disturbed the peace in our church with a destructive word here or there, or by our poisonous actions, or by our lack of action when it's needed most?

The devil wants to ruin the unity of every church in our synod, every church in the world. United we stand; divided we fall. The devil wants to divide us so that we fall. He doesn't just want churches to fall and disintegrate and close the doors, the devil wants souls to fall from grace into eternal punishment. Satan wants you to fall. If he can get congregations to fight among themselves, he can get souls to fall.

So how do you combat the devil's ruinous works and ways? The Apostle Paul simply reminds the Corinthians of the gospel, the good news of the mercy and love our Triune God has for us. We are reminded today of the triple-decker blessings which flow from our Triune God.

First God gives us a Savior from our sins. Jesus wasn't just a wise teacher, some rabbi spouting little rules to live by; he wasn't just an example of honest, clean living; he didn't just come to impart selflessness in selfish human beings. Jesus came to earth to rescue us from the quicksand of our sins which were sucking our souls down to hell. Without Jesus, we are lost.

But our Triune God gives us the first layer of our triple-decker of blessings – he gives us his grace through Jesus. Paul writes to the Corinthians, and to you and me, "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." That's not just a pious wish, but an accomplished fact because of Jesus' death and resurrection. We have God grace which covers over our sins.

Transition: But just as we didn't stop with just one scoop on our ice cream treat in the sermon introduction, God doesn't stop at one scoop of blessings. God the Father gives us his ...

II. Love

Paul continues to combat the devil's ruinous works and ways. He goes on with his encouragement to the Corinthians and to you and me, "May...the love of God [the Father] be with you all." This too, is an accomplished fact. God has loved us with a love so deep we can never fully appreciate it on this side of heaven. God loved us enough to give us life, our bodies which are fearfully and wonderfully made, and the absolutely gorgeous world in which we live. God created us and the world, and you had better be sure that he takes care of both very well.

We do the same thing, don't we? We build our homes, our businesses, our good name, our families, and then we take care of them. We maintain the things we have built. So too, God the Father takes care of us – the people he has "built." He gives us our daily bread. He gives us a Savior from sin. And when we die, he gives us the crown of eternal life because of Jesus.

The believers in Corinth were reassured that God the Father would take care of their congregation. We know with all certainty that God will take care of our church, your home church, and that God will take care of every individual believer.

Transition: God's triple-decker of blessings is getting better all the time, isn't it. Here comes the third scoop of blessings. The Holy Spirit gives us ...

III. Fellowship

The devil had particularly attacked the unity of the Corinthian church. In response Paul writes, "Be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. May the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Paul says, "Be of one mind, live in peace." Only a common faith rooted in the Savior could unite them. Paul reminds them that they already shared this common faith in Jesus.

We have this same faith in the Savior. The Holy Spirit gave us the gift of faith when we were baptized, or for a few adult converts when a Christian friend or family member told you about the good news of your salvation in Jesus.

We have the third scoop of blessing which flows from the Holy Spirit – fellowship, with faith comes fellowship. Although our sins had separated us from God, we have been reunited with him. Jesus removed the barrier of sin when he died on the cross. Through faith the Holy Spirit reunites us with God; we are in fellowship with him.

Not only are we in fellowship with God, we also have fellowship with all other believers in Jesus. The Corinthians shared this common faith in Jesus, they were united in fellowship with one another. That's why Paul addresses them as "Brothers" in the beginning of our text. In spite of their problems, in spite of their sins, they were Christians, perhaps weak now and then, but Christians who trusted Jesus to take them to heaven.

We are united with these ancient Christians. The common bond is faith in Jesus our Savior. We are united in fellowship with one another at this congregation. We are united with sister WELS churches and missions throughout the United States and the world. We have received the third scoop of God's triple-decker of blessings – the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion: I hope today that I've made you hungry, not just for an ice cream sundae, but for all the blessings which flow from our Triune God, the triple-decker blessings, of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Amen.