**John 8:48-59**

The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” **49** Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. **50** Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. **51** Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” **52** The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’ **53**  Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?” **54** Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ **55** But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word. **56**  Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” **57** So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” **58** Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” **59** So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

**“God For Us”**

Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided unity. Let us give glory to Him because He has shown his mercy on us. Amen.

There is lots of graduating going on this time of the year. Growth and achievement in terms of learning is something to celebrate. A person comes to better think on his or her own and about the world they live in. Yet, the spring pastor’s conference recently noted over 25% of those 18-29 claim the label, “none” when it comes to God. Shutting the mind off from God leaves man empty over existence and finally makes death the ultimate end of life.

The Sunday after Pentecost reminds us nobody graduates from God. The mystery of the Holy Trinity is exactly that, a mystery not to solve, but to celebrate. Since we did not make life, none can grasp it fully on their own terms or from what creation offers. It requires more than information, but wisdom that is beyond us, bigger than us, and outside of us. Proverbs usually is about quick facts for how we should handle life, but today we hear how God in His wisdom searches us out. He says, “To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man.”

As God is the Holy Trinity, one God and three persons, so He is above us, with us, and for us.

1. **The more man talks the farther out of sight is God and His Word. “Lot of talking was going on at the temple.”**

* They falsely labeled Jesus to be a wicked man.
* “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?”
* Rather than reason, ridicule is what made better sense to win their battle.
* This kind of mudslinging is no less painful than what happens in politics. (8th commandment)
* This is the labeling that falls upon any baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
* They resented Jesus being greater than Abraham.
* “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.”
* Honoring the “fathers” of their past was about works not about what they actually believed, taught, and confessed. (4th commandment)
* Greater than physical death is the spiritual death that has an authority of its own.
* Our Lutheran Fathers note, “…even the most gifted and the most educated people on earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot by their own powers perceive this, comprehend it, understand it, or believe and accept it as the truth” (Tappert 521-522).
* They opposed Jesus holding up the claim to be God.
* He told them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’ So they picked up stones to throw at him…”
* It was blasphemy to use the personal name of God, YHWH! (2nd commandment)
* The solution to their problem turned from reason to using brute force.
* The greatest blasphemy today is still Jesus, since it is not about a religion, but HIM!

***Jesus reveals the outcome of human reason in relation to God, “But you have not known him. I know him.”***

1. **The more Jesus talks the more we rightly see God and His Word.**

* God is above us for the Son is one with the Father.
* Jesus told them at the temple, “I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge.” (Creator)
* This eternal glory of God is the wisdom that gave rise to a reasonable creation as Proverbs points out, “I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always…”
* This is the glory of God’s Word that became flesh as St. John proclaimed, “…we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
* This glory Christ shines over His Church for He says, “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.” Luke 10:16
* God is with us promising His plan of salvation saves. (Redeemer)
* Jesus told the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”
* The letter of Hebrews makes the point, “By faith he (Abraham) went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise” (Hebrews 11:9).
* To honor the “fathers” is to know and trust the same God who now completed all things for us in Christ.
* This wisdom is not a feat of man, but a gift from God for Jesus says, “…if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”
* God is for us to call, enlighten, and sanctify our lives by His Word. (Life Giver)
* In an age of many religions and spiritual beliefs Jesus tares them down saying, “before Abraham was, I am.” (Confusion cast out by Him calling)
* The Word and Sacraments are not a social creation of human standards, but God for us. (The offense continues because He enlightens)
* Since Christ gives His holiness for our eternal benefit, we are now mindful with love toward God and how best to serve our neighbor. (The opposition to this sanctity is conflict.)
* Rather than reason running mad it is to become captive to Christ. His Word gives confident lives and peace that not even death can undo.

We celebrate the gift of skills and minds God gives, especially to our graduates. However, if knowledge is power, wisdom puts knowledge in its place. Peter first preached this Word on Pentecost and we still hear it today, “God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Nobody graduates from God, not when Jesus has given everything for you. As God is the Holy Trinity, one God and three persons, so He is above us, with us, and for us. Amen. In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.