

Sermon  
Sunday, August 1st, 2025  
The Eighth Sunday After Pentecost  
Church of the Ascension, Ottawa  
The Reverend Victoria Scott

Readings: Hosea 11:1-11; Psalm 107:1-9, 43; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

An Unholy Trinity. Not the Unholy Trinity described in the book of Revelation. Not the Unholy Trinity of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. No, this morning we have an opportunity to consider an Unholy Trinity of "Me, Myself and I".

We might think that the parable we've just heard in our Gospel passage for today – often referred to as the Parable of the Rich Fool – is all about wealth. About money, possessions, greed. How much do we have, how much do we share. You might be expecting this to be a stewardship sermon. Well, yes and no... 😊

Listen again to these verses about the rich man. He "...thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup> Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' (Luke 12:17-19)

All I statements! And then, notice that he's actually talking to himself, saying Soul: relax, eat, drink, be merry. The rich man is caught in an Unholy Trinity of "Me, Myself and I". He has no one to invite to the party but himself. Then, in the middle of this lonely feast, God appears to demand his soul. The man has lived a life of abundance but instead of having that abundance draw him into relationship and community, instead of having lived a life of thanksgiving in deeper relationship with God and others, his wealth has isolated him – it has left him in a silo – and he ends his earthly life alienated and alone.

This parable highlights missed opportunities. Did that crop produce and harvest itself? What about the workers who toiled in those fields? Did the man build those barns by himself? I doubt it. Yet, the rich man has stopped seeing others, stopped seeing his neighbours. This is a particular kind of greed. The kind of greed that

pushes us into self-reliance - that lets us think that we have to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. That leaves us thinking that we don't need each other or that we have no responsibility to each other.

Our reading from Colossians speaks of a renewed self that recognizes "...Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11) This reminds us not to let wealth, possessions or anything else cloud our vision, or surround us in ways that leave us isolated, alienated from others and from our world. It reminds us not to let ourselves get lost in an Unholy Trinity of Me, Myself and I. It reminds us that our blessings, our wealth, our possessions, our love, is there not to be clung to, not to be a buffer, but to share. It is made to be exchanged in community.

Our reading from the prophet Hosea offers us a picture of God as parent. This is a picture of relationship. That relationship is not without challenges, heartache, suffering, but ultimately it is one rooted in and held together with love. This is an invitation for us to recognize the importance of relationship: we were made to be in relationship with God, with each other and with our world – and we were made to be in *loving* relationship.

The Unholy Trinity of Me, Myself and I is isolating. It cuts us off, and leaves us feeling alone. We are not alone, though! The Incarnation - God made known in Jesus, God entering our time and space to show us how much we are loved, to show us that we are connected to God through Jesus, in and through God's Spirit, at work all around us, now and forever - means that we are never alone.

I'm a fan of American folk rock band "The Avett Brothers". One of their songs is titled "I and Love and You". "I and Love and You" is another kind of Trinity, and it is our way out of that Unholy Trinity of "Me, Myself and I". It is love that can pull us out of a preoccupation with self, to see and feel the "You" of God. "I and Love and You" reminds us that it is never just "I". By coming to be with us in Jesus, God made an eternal "I and Love and You". That "I and Love and You" is woven through all of creation. We are made to live that "I and Love and You" with each other, in all our encounters, in all our days on this life's journey.

What does a Me, Myself and I existence look like? It looks like the rich man in this morning's parable: a lonely feast, without thanksgiving, and without a community

to share in the abundance. Here, in this place, we give thanks in community, we share in song and prayer and sacrament together. We pray for the healing and repair of brokenness in our world, together. .

I said this wasn't a stewardship sermon, and ultimately the invitation today is to reflect on relationship – with God, and each other – part of this reflection *is* about time, talent and treasure. It's about the opportunities that time, talent and treasure can create for community and for relationships. It's about this blessed place of Ascension, and how we can create and maintain a space for relationships, and for love, and for transformation that happens when we gather together.

May we recognize the “I and Love and You” of our Christian faith as we worship this morning. May we feel the presence of the eternal “You” of God that is more than we can ask or imagine. May we look into each other's eyes and hearts as we sing and pray and share in the sacrament together and know that love joins us all with God, and with each other and our world.

When you leave this place, think about the connections you have in and through and beyond this place. Think about your time, talent and treasure, and how you might use to it deepen connections, to respond to need, and to be in relationship in ways that transform our world. May our words, our actions, our way in the world be not about that Unholy Trinity of “Me, Myself and I”, but about “I and Love and You” today and every day, in Jesus name.