

TRINITY X SERMON By BISHOP MICHAEL HAWKINS

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No one can say, Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.

When my children were small they could sense when I felt used by them. They would offer a big hug and say something like, Dad we love you more than food. I remember that experience and their expression every time I hear the phrase in the collect for today about asking such things as shall please him.

We most often use and hear titles when someone is looking for something from us. It's true of "Dad" and "Bishop" that that what follows is often a request. Dad, can we go out for supper? Dad, can we buy this? Sometimes our children's requests frustrate us and shock us and sometimes they delight us. Asking for a pair of scissors to cut dandelions for Mom was a request I still recall with warm fondness. But most of all the requests of our children that delight us (and haunt us) are when they ask for nothing, no thing, but us. Dad, can you play with us? When you spend time with us?

While i imagine that our requests or prayers likewise frustrate and shock God, many must delight him as when we ask for our needy neighbour or broken world but what i imagine must please god most is when we ask for nothing, n thing but him. When we ask and seek and knock for him. The gift of God is ultimately God's own self, given to us from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus teaches us to pray, he teaches us to ask for the Holy Spirit. How much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him.

Saint Paul talks in our Epistle reading about a variety of gifts but let us first of all recall that the gift of God is God the Holy Spirit himself. While Paul does go on to speak about different gifts, gifts of the head as knowledge, gifts of the hands as healing and miracles, and gifts of the heart like prophecy, let us rest for a

while on thinking about that one gift common to all of us and which distinguishes us as Christians. Jesus is Lord.

The common gift is to know and obey Jesus of Nazareth as Lord. And that is not something we come to or do on our own, it is a gift to believe, to have faith in Jesus the Lord and to love him as Lord. It is the Holy Spirit at work in us and with us who brings us to such faith and love. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God, Jesus responded, Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. It is by the Holy Spirit within us that we believe and confess Jesus Christ the Lord.

In the Nicene Creed we say that we believe that the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord and the Holy Ghost is Lord. We know that Jesus is Lord, the Lord God come in the person of his Son in our flesh and blood to be our Saviour. And this gift of the Spirit in us is the means whereby we receive and know our common salvation. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Our common gift is this acknowledgement in heart and voice of Jesus as Lord and this is what distinguishes us as Christians.

Yet we need also to remember that our Lord warns us, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Paul writes about believing and confessing, and we might recognize that confessing involves both our words and our deeds. This Christian believing, this Christian confessing and this Christian living are only possible by the gift and power, the influence and inbreathing of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that in thought, word and deed we may believe and tell and show that Jesus is Lord. Amen.