

**+ 2 Corinthians 13:14 + This Is the Story of Your Life +**  
**+ 1st Sunday after Pentecost: Holy Trinity + 3 June 2012 +**

It can be pretty fascinating when someone tells the story of their life. The stories of people's lives told in biographies and autobiographies are often some of the best-selling books on the market. They're often some of the most popular movies too, when the books are converted to screenplays. Even so, the person whose story is told doesn't have to be famous or powerful or wealthy. It could simply be the story of an average person who lived in interesting times. Often it's the real stories of the lives of real people like you and me that are most fascinating, because reality is often more amazing or more unusual than any fiction one could try to write.

Sometimes these stories are told in epic fashion—the entire life of an individual spanning decades, continents, and major historical events. Sometimes these stories are told very briefly as they describe a single episode in one's life. Some even try to tell their story using only six words!

So how would you tell the story of your life? Would it be in epic form or with a single episode or would you even try the six-word route? While you and I would probably have a lot of fun trying to figure out how we would tell the stories of our lives, someone from 2000 years ago is going to do it for us—not in epic fashion, but with the brief words of a blessing. The Apostle Paul uses very brief, yet very powerful words to tell the story of the mystery of the Holy Trinity and its role in your life and mine. With these few words of blessing, St. Paul causes you and me to marvel at that mystery because **THIS IS THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE**.

This story of the Holy Trinity in your life has to start somewhere. What a better place to start than with ***“the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...”*** This story of your life has to start with grace, with the absolutely undeserved, amazingly self-sacrificing loving kindness of Jesus. Now why is that? Why start with something not a single one of us has ever deserved?

Well, if not for the grace of Jesus, you wouldn't be here! The story of your life would be completely different, and it wouldn't have a happy ending. When your life began at the moment of conception, when God in his infinite wisdom caused the miracle of life to happen in your mother's womb, there was something wrong. It wasn't necessarily something that was physically wrong, but it was something that was wrong spiritually. Right there wrapped around your developing DNA was a deadly growing sinful nature. It was something your parents passed on to you, which they had received from their parents and from their parents and from their parents. That deadly sin tainted your life at conception and began to show itself after you were born and as you grew: a cruel or hurtful word here, a selfish or heartless action there, a constant stream of self-centered, “my way or the highway” thoughts that continues to try to dominate your thoughts even today. There was no real joy, no real satisfaction, no real peace, no real hope no real love in your life, because it was all corrupted with sin.

Sadly by nature, you and I are so blind with sin that we think we like it! Who of us doesn't like to get our way? By nature, we like to get the attention. We like people to see how great we really are. Your sinful nature loves to polish up those “great” things you do for others, your neighbor, your company, your school, your community, and tries to brush under the rug the envy, the arrogance, the self-centeredness, the lovelessness you've felt or shown.

...Yet deep down inside, you and I know it can't last and it won't. We know that nothing in this life lasts forever because sin has consequences. Things break. Relationships fall apart. Corrupt motives or despicable acts are revealed, and over it all, death looms. The ancient curse of the holy God rings out from the earliest pages of Holy Scripture, ***“For dust you are and to dust you will return”***. (Genesis 3:19) Sadly for so many the story of their lives, no matter how prosperous, no matter how successful, no matter how popular, no matter how famous, ends there with physical death leading to eternal death in the fires of hell separated from God's love for all eternity.

...But your story and mine is different. Why? You don't deserve anything different from anyone else and neither do I. So what changes the story of your life? ***“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...”*** You and I were in horrible shape because of sin, so Jesus, the Son of God, did something about it. As true God, Jesus possessed all things and enjoyed the glories and comforts of heaven, but he gave it all up. With promises he made to our first parents and generation after generation after them, Jesus set the stage to show his grace to a world of sinful, hateful humanity. When the time was right, he chose to be conceived and born as a human being, yet he was without sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He developed and grew just like you and me, yet there was no sinful nature wrapped around his DNA. As true God and true

man, Jesus allowed himself to undergo the difficulties and challenges and dangers of growing up in a sinful world, but that wasn't the end of his story. The Son of God had far greater dangers and challenges to endure.

Jesus lived up to his name, which means "Savior". He carried that name because he came to this earth to save you from your sins and from the sad ending of death. To do that, he himself endured unimaginable suffering at the hands of sinful people, and then endured death on a cross. He allowed his blood to be shed not for himself, but for you. He paid the price of judgment for your lifetime of sin against the Holy God, and in doing so, he reconciled you with the Holy God. To guarantee that he had both forgiven every one of those self-centered sins and saved you from eternal death, Jesus rose from the dead. It was Christ's grace that changed your story.

If it was the grace of Jesus that changed the story of your life forever, what was the motivation, the driving factor behind that life-changing grace? It was **"the love of God"** the Father for sinners like you and me. When God created the heavens and the earth, he took special care in creating man and woman. They were the jewels of his creation, but when they disobeyed his holy will, they ruined all of God's creation with their sin. In spite of their disobedience God in his gracious mercy still loved humanity. So he put that love into action. He demonstrated his own love for each and every one of us sinners, by sending his one and only Son into this world to live and die and rise again to save us. That **"love of God"** motivated **"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"** to change the story of your life forever. Even now God the Father demonstrates his love in the blessings he pours out on you day after day. He provides all that you need and even more. He provides you blessings for your body and your soul, and even now through Christ, God gives you and me what we did not have before—real joy, real peace, real satisfaction, real hope that one day we are going to spend eternity with our loving heavenly Father.

So what's the rest of the story? Well, the result of the grace of Jesus brought to us by the love of God is **"the fellowship of the Holy Spirit"**—unity shared with God and with each other. You see, the triune God in his grace and love not only saved you through the work of Jesus Christ, but also made you his own through the work of the Holy Spirit. Through the hearing of his Word, the Holy Spirit created faith in your heart—not by some decision or act of surrender of your own, but through that amazing, powerful Word that shattered your stone-dead heart and made it alive with living faith in Christ Jesus. Through the water and Word of Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit changed your heart and transformed you from a mortal enemy into a reconciled child of God who now has fellowship with Jesus. Now you get to share in all his blessings of grace.

The Holy Spirit, who called you by his power through Word and Sacrament, now by that same power causes you to overflow with hope and peace and love for others. With the Spirit's help, when your relationship with a friend or loved one is strained, you can strive to restore that relationship with the peace that comes only from the triune God. When a brother or sister in Christ is grieving, you can comfort them with the certainty of the resurrection. You can live in real hope and peace, even though you live in a world that strives against everything for which we stand as Christians. You can have the confidence to tell someone about their Savior when they desperately need him. You can remain united with your fellow believers not on some false unity based on a minimum of agreement, but on the true and pure teaching of God's Word, particularly this blessed mystery of the triune God. Then someday when it's time for the story of your life on this earth to come to an end, you can look forward to enjoying an eternity of Christ's grace, God's love, and fellowship with the Spirit and with your brothers and sisters in Christ in the glories of heaven.

I tell you, the story of your life and the role of the Trinity in your life is more amazing than any autobiography or biopic shown on the silver screen. You and I could spend the rest of eternity talking about this story of the Trinity in our lives. Until we reach eternity, it's a story for you and me to share—the grace of Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to the triune God, because that, my friends, is the story of your life! Amen.