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Memorial Day & Baptism Sunday, May 30, 2010

Sermon Texts: Proverb 8: 22-31
Psalm 8: 4-9
John 16: 12-15
Romans 5: 1-5

Sermon Title: "Nod Your Heads Up-and-Down"

Sermon Topic: The Love of God: The Trinity

Sermon Purpose: To teach that we are to be the image of God's love in our relationships on this earth.

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Sermon Prayer: Lord Jesus, as we study the Living Word and the Written Word of God, help us – with the help of the Holy Spirit - to understand God's plan for our lives. In this we pray. Amen.

We're called to **imitate** God on earth. At least, that's what the Scriptures tell us. When we learn **how** to reflect a clear image of the divine model we draw ourselves into a closer **union** with God. Contrary to the **prevailing** notion in today's world, learning how to **love** is what life's all about. That's why we bring **children** into the world. That's why we're here, **today**: to learn how to love others ... and ourselves. And whenever you think of it **that** way, your mind and your heart and your soul are **imaging** the mind, heart, and soul of the Lord Jesus.

All of life is a "Learning-how-to-**love** project" for each of us. And, if someone should ask, "How's your **project** coming along?" truthfully, we'd have to acknowledge that we need to develop our skills.

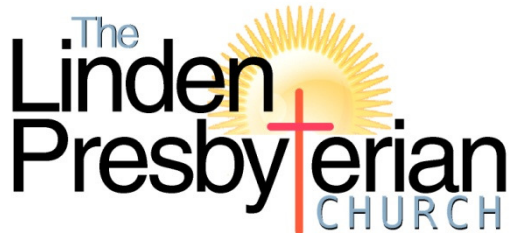
I used to have a professor known as "screaming Tony." Dr. Anthony Moreno taught Spanish and was a very emotional man. He quickly became very frustrated when someone pulled a bonehead move in his class. He would yell and carry on in the classroom so loudly that when anyone came to the building and asked how to find him, the answer was always "Wait a few seconds and follow the yelling."

I remember one situation where Dr. Moreno was going his miles with a few of us and he made the comment, "What do you want from me, me left arm, my right arm, my good eye? No! Don't answer me! You just sit there 'como un burro' nodding your head up and down: yes, Dr. Moreno, I understand. And then you turn around and screw it up! If you want to be a bonehead, get out of my class!"

I can still hear him: "Nodding your head up and down ... como un burro."

Let me put it this way. When you look into the mirror of your own soul, what do you see reflected? Do you see a **perfect** image of the God of love? If you're inclined to nod your head up-and-down, signifying "**yes**," then I'd urge you to look again. Hopefully, a **closer** look will reflect an image of





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you as a dedicated **apprentice** in the school of learning-how-to-love – an image of one who can say in all honesty “I need to do **more**. I need to **practice** more. I need to try **harder**.”

A person cannot look to the Biblical writers for answers about life’s meaning without discovering that everyone agrees that the Bible tells us **who** and **why** we are. It’s simple and explicit. You can accept it or reject it. You can nod your head up-and-down (yes) or shake it from side-to-side (no). But, the answer they give is perfectly **clear**: we have been created for the basic purpose of relating to God. The better we’re able to relate to God, the better we’re able to reflect his image. The better we’re able to reflect God’s image, the more fully human we’ll become. The more fully human we become – according to God’s plan for us, the more meaningful life will become for us.

Our lives move in the direction of fulfillment to the degree that we’re positioning ourselves to reflect God, to accept God as the Source of life and the Master of our life’s ministry. The most important thing that’s taking place in your life at this very moment is that inner-drama of saying “Yes!” or “No!” to God. (Do you see your heads nodding up-and-down?)

We sit here and we say, “Yes!” to God – in Church. But the question is “What difference will that make when we get up and face the world tomorrow morning?” Will it really make a difference in our work environment? Will it make a difference in how we spend our leisure time? Will it make a difference in our whole lifestyle?

Who am I? What’s it all about? You’ll never begin to know until you fix your gaze on God and begin trying to reflect his image and his glory – the image and the glory of **Love!**

In Today’s Gospel Lesson, Jesus speaks to his disciples of the **perfect family**; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. “Everything the Father has is mine,” Jesus says.¹ And, “When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth.”² Life is the divinely created school of **learning** the complete truth, which is to say, “Life is the divinely created school of learning how to **love**.”

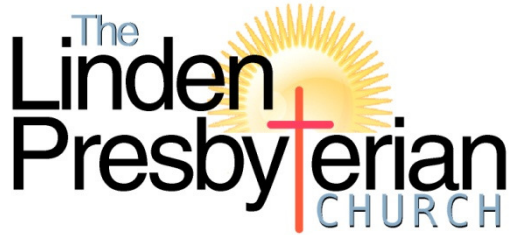
There are mornings when we get up and begin to follow our neatly prepared agendas; our lists of things we’re going to accomplish; things that are going wrong that we’re going to turn around; things that are going right that we’re going to keep moving that along. But, often it happens that something **unforeseen** intervenes and our neatly laid plans go **awry**. And we have to re-evaluate our entire agenda. That’s **life!** But, in the midst of it all, each new decision can be life-enhancing if it is done with the realization that **all** of life’s decisions – in some way – have to do with saying “Yes!” or “No!” to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is always calling to look steadily at the perfect law of love and to make that our habit – not listening and forgetting, but actively putting it into practice. The Lord Jesus Christ is always asking us to nod our heads up-and-down in answer to his question, “Do you love me? ... Do you love one another?”

¹ John 20: 15

² John 20: 13





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Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, as we reflect the divine love of God, send your Holy Spirit upon us to be the image of God in our relationships and in our daily lives. This we pray, as brothers and sisters – heirs to the kingdom of God – through the sacrifice made on our behalf. Amen.

