

"A Man of Passion – Rev. Ik-Hwan Moon"

June 2, 2024
King City United Church
Rev. Padre Andrew K. Lee

Prayer for Illumination

Come, Holy Spirit, giver of life; breathe into us that we may hear a word of truth this day. Draw us into communion, enable us to love, conspire to make us one with you for the world you so deeply love. **Amen.**

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴ The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" ⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷ The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

< Children's Time >

Hello, my friends who are young at heart. Today, I will explain a really complicated word used at church: Trinity. What is Trinity? You may have heard it more than several times: Trinity. It sounds like a word describing three things in one, like a printer, scanner, and fax machine, all in one. That's not wrong. In the word Trinity, the three parts are God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The Church explained these three characters in the most complicated and confusing debates. So, some Christians leave the church due to this illogical or at least weird explanation that they cannot accept. But my friends, don't worry about it too much. It's not a must to understand it fully in order to become a true Christian. This is like if you cannot understand your father who is not buying computer game items to put some money into an RESP account for your future education. It may feel totally unacceptable to you, but that doesn't mean that he is not your father. Am I right? Sometimes, I do not understand my father, but that doesn't mean he is not my father. Our God has a mysterious character that we cannot fully understand, but that doesn't mean God is not my Father God. No worries. Our lack of wisdom about the trinity doesn't affect the divine relationship between you and God. Instead, we intentionally try to understand what the Holy Spirit is with curiosity.

You know, Jesus was crucified and resurrected. When he ascended to heaven, Jesus informed his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be with them.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit is about truth. And the disciples experienced the Holy Spirit as a healing power and the strong power of miracles. We cannot explain it very well because we didn't experience it. Then how is the Holy Spirit working in us? Can you explain?

Hm... how about this? When you are praying to God or working for God, a new idea or an innovative thought may have come upon you. And you know that the thought is not from you, but a very new way to serve God. Wouldn't that be a work of the Holy Spirit within you? If you voluntarily dedicate yourself to serving God and serving others throughout your life, wouldn't that be a work of the Holy Spirit within us? If you hear the inner voice of truth and deep love towards the poor and the vulnerable, wouldn't that be a work of the Holy Spirit? If you are angry when you hear the news of violence in Ukraine, wouldn't that be the heart that the Holy Spirit gives to you? If you decide to spend your time and resources to make peace in the nations that have struggles at their borders and the tension of war like in the Gaza Strip, or have a violent war and deadly hunger like in Sudan, wouldn't it be the work of the Holy Spirit? If we feel angry and want to mourn with the victims and their families of the

Residential Schools in Canada, wouldn't that be the work of the Holy Spirit? Yes, my friends, those are the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus said, the main characteristic of the Holy Spirit is truth. And where there is pure and innocent truth, there is the work of the Holy Spirit. In other words, when the truth speaks to you, that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

My friends, I hope you can experience the movement, the touch of the Holy Spirit in critical moments in your life and in every moment of your life. The Holy Spirit is of truth. Let the truth speak to you. God bless my friends! Amen.

<Reflection>

Today is the Trinity Sunday in the Church calendar, and we are encouraged to throw ourselves into the mystery of the divine Trinity, of the Father or the Mother God, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The first description of the Trinity happened at the council of Nicaea in 325 BCE. It was for the fight against the group of people who were for Gnosticism. They rejected the Jesus who was a human. Although the doctrine of the Trinity was efficient in eradicating Gnosticism from Christianity, the logic itself was not easily received. Today is not a philosophy class, so I am not going to

explore the systemic theology by delving into the long debates of the doctrine. As I mentioned in Children's Time, this complicated mystery must not interfere with our faith and relationship with God. Instead, I'd like to explore how the Holy Spirit revealed herself in a man of passion, Rev. Ik-Hwan Moon, celebrating Asian Heritage Month.



Rev. Ik-Hwan Moon was born in 1918 and became a professor at Hanshin Theological University in Seoul, Korea. Hanshin Theological University was in the denomination of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, also called PROK, with whom the United Church of Canada has had a close relationship since their beginning. Rev. Ik-Hwan Moon's passion for God led him to participate in the social movements in South Korea, where the military dictatorship was oppressing the people in the nation. He restlessly pursued democracy for the country and threw himself into the social movement for

reunification between South Korea and North Korea. It was shocking when he visited the leader of North Korea, Il-sung Kim, in 1989 without permission from the government of South Korea. From 1979 to 1993, for 17 years, Rev. Moon had been jailed six times and spent ten years and three months in jail. And in 1994, the very next year after his prison release, he passed away due to heart failure at his age of 76. As an alumnus and one of the many people who respected his life and works, I witnessed his funeral. He was respected and remembered not only as a Minjung theologian – a contextual theology in Korea – but also as a passionate leader for Christian values of love, peace, and reconciliation.

From his passionate and dedicated life for democracy and reconciliation, it is imperative for us to question why and how the Triune God worked in him. Do you think the power of the Holy Spirit was with him throughout his life? The Holy Spirit and its works must include passionate actions toward democracy or against violence.

Although we are enjoying an era of technology, where we can watch live streaming news while even walking, we still witness illogical or unreasonable human violence and war around the world. At the same time, even though we, humankind, can travel to the moon and Mars, the work of the Holy Spirit is still ongoing. Therefore, our prayers for ending the war and violence in the world and war crimes in Ukraine and Israel, and prayers for peace worldwide are central to the works of the Holy Spirit. Our works as agents of the Holy Spirit are still in need and still valid.

Sisters, brothers and friends. Jesus says that when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. And we know that the truth is not very hard. The truth comes not from a highly sophisticated scientific logic or claim but from loving, giving, dedicating, sharing, and serving.

The Prophet Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" As he responded, "Here am I; send me!," Rev. Ik-Hwan Moon

responded sincerely, guided by the Holy Spirit and became a man of passion until he died. While he was in jail in 1981, he wrote the lyric of VU 698 as a profession of his faith and the power of the Holy Spirit within him.

- 1 With the wings of our mind on the wind flying,
to the silent breathless earth God's love sending,
let the brave justice flag wave high above,
to the heavens and the earth freedom bringing.

- 2 With the wings of our tears on the wind flowing,
to the dry and thirsty earth God's love sending,
let the fountain of love spring forth with joy,
'til the flowers of our hearts advent blooming.

- 3 With the wings of our song on the wind flying
to the dreary desolate earth our love sending,
let the vision of light open wide our hearts
'til the songs of our hope freedom ringing.

May the Holy Spirit come to you, stir you, confuse you,
and transform you so that the Spirit One and you create
sacred holiness together today. Let us pray silently.