



Dr. Schniffenhausen explains the Trinity - Children's address



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-1AdUwbWLw>

Bible Readings:

God is good... all the time

Call to worship/ Opening Prayer

Life-providing God, we gather to praise you.
Receive the humble praise we offer.

Lead-giving Christ, we gather to follow you.
Guide us in your ways in our worship.

Love-sharing Spirit, we gather to grow.
Nurture our faith this hour.

Ready, steady, stop! Help us all to:
stop bullying and brutality, stop hunger and hurt,
stop fear and famine. Help us all to be ready, and
steady, and to stop!

Ready, steady, wait! Help us all to:
Wait for the slower ones amongst us, wait for the
things we can't yet have, wait on your teaching to
help us grow. Help us all to be ready, and steady,
and to wait!

Ready, steady, go! Help us all to:
go and offer kindness, go and speak the truth,
go and be your light, help us all to be ready,
and steady,
and to go in the name of Jesus our teacher.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen

in the beginning...

Genesis 1: 1-5

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Matthew 22:37-39

37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

38 "This is the first and great commandment.

39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Brief Reflection [This reflection includes an adaptation of Max Lucado's prayer and reflection on recent events]

Most, if not all, of us have been saddened by the news we've watched recently on our TV screens or read in the papers including; the killing of George Floyd in police custody and in broad daylight, the subsequent riots and looting in major cities in USA, the devastating effect of floods and locust invasions in many parts of the world, the growing need in our communities for food and other basic items, the increasing number of people losing their savings and jobs because of the Covid-19 pandemic and more so, the increasing mention of a second wave of coronavirus. We have been left wondering, how much more can we take? There is so much disruption, so much fear, so much hate! Our planet seems so fragile and under siege. On one hand we battle this unseen virus, and on the other, with the ancient and malignant racism. It seems like we are overwhelmed, with little or no hope for calm and healing.

Yet, now is the time for faith. This is the time for us, for those of us who pray, to pray more, more passionately, more urgently, more frequently now than ever before. This is also the time for those of us who trust God, to trust Him more. We may feel like drowning in a sea

of troubles and contradictions or that there is no way out of this, but our God is still in control and He knows better.

Only seven days ago, we remembered the first Pentecost and asked the Holy Spirit, in prayer, to bless us again. I have no doubt that He is doing exactly that. He is blessing us with His empowering and enriching presence. He is doing (and indeed can do) what no man, no government, no system can do. He can and will calm this storm. I know He can calm it because He has done so before. As we heard in our first Bible reading, the first recorded act of the Holy Spirit in earthly history was to turn chaos into calm. We heard (Genesis 2:1) that **'the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters'**. As Max Lucado rightly reminds us, 'the inaugural activity of the Spirit of God was to hover over the face of a dark, troubled, chaotic and formless earth. He hovered protectively over the earth, just as a mother eagle hovers over her young ones, who've just witnessed (I guess in horror) the destruction of their nest' (Deuteronomy 32:11).

Note also that the hovering (or better still, the calming) of the Spirit of God over the earth immediately precedes God's creation of light (Gen 1:3). Before God said, 'let there be light', the Spirit of God was at work, calming the world – preparing it (it seems to me) to receive life. So, as we go to God in prayer, to ask Him to calm our chaotic, troubled and divided world, we can be certain that although we do not have answers, He has answers. He says, **'Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know'** (Jeremiah 3:33). He hears and provides answers to our prayerful cry for peace, justice, unity and for the healing of our land. He will spread a blanket of calm around our troubled world and remove the fear, anxiety, hate, anger, hostility and emptiness that fester deep, in and around individuals, families, communities and nations. Our creator God, the God who lighted up a dark world asks us not to give up. He invites us to join Him, in prayer and acts of justice and loving kindness, to push back darkness around us. He says, **'If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land'** (2 Chronicles 7:14). Please continue to join me in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to calm our troubled world. Amen

“Fear may fill our world, but it doesn't have to fill our hearts” Max Lucado

many countries in the world. We ask, in prayer, that God will once again bring beauty from the ashes.

Let us pray,

God, our heavenly Father, our minds go back to the day when Jesus knelt beside his beloved city and wept, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:42).

We sense so deeply the same reality. We weep for our cities even as we bury our dead. The sound of gunfire is the grim sound of what has already shattered our relationships. We are witnesses of distrust, revenge and anger. We see no one to lead us and guide us. To whom shall we go? Our differences seem to lead us even farther apart. Oh, Lord of miracles, do what only you can do to save us from ourselves. Give us men and women who will lead us to reconciliation. Give us leaders who will bind us up to heal our wounds, not those who will only incite more hate. Give us voices that will bring hope and not despair. Please comfort the bereaved and give humility to the ones who are resistant to your ways. Give us pause so that we might sit back for just a few moments to look to you before we look at our impulsive solutions.

We shed another's blood when we are without answers. You shed your own blood as our only answer. We kill, buried in despair. You rise, giving us hope. You told Peter to put back his sword and you restored the one wounded. That's what we long for. A reprimand to the one who would injure and a healing within the one injured. God of miracles, please do it again. We need you. Our nation needs you. Our leaders need you. Many a home today will not have a loved one returning. Without you we have no hope. With you all things are possible—even for beauty to come out of ashes. We pray for the day of unarmed truth and unconditional love.

Please answer our prayer. In the name of Jesus your Son, our only Saviour, we ask this. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Immortal Invisible, God only wise (Grace Community Church)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIHD40CZY34>

Holy Holy Holy

Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning
our song shall rise to Thee
Holy Holy Holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that.”

- Rev Dr Martin Luther King

Prayer for Others

Ravi Zacharias penned the prayer below on July 8, 2016, after tragic events in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Dallas. His words of lament and hope were both timely and timeless, even as we mourn current examples of evil and injustice in USA, such as the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor. We join victims and peaceful protestors against racism, hate and marginalisation in USA and other

Final blessings

We have God's blessing to be disciples, and to make disciples. Not knowing all the answers, not promising to give all the answers; but content to know, and confirm to others, that God is present, in all the mix of certainty and doubt that is human life. Amen

God is good all the time