



## Who is God?

### “Who Is God?”

The Holy Trinity  
Saturday & Sunday, June 15–16, 2019  
All Services  
The Reverend Elizabeth E. Frey  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

John 16:12-15

Who is God? My first reaction when I heard this was our theme for today was: you've got to be kidding me! You're asking me who God is. Am I qualified to answer this question? Is anyone qualified to answer this question?

I really struggled with this question of 'who is God' in the years that I was studying to become a pastor. As I'm sure you can imagine, a big part of this process is examinations and essays, tests and papers and of course, interviews.

Throughout this process also known as candidacy, I sat for interviews before a committee from our synod several times. In these interviews, they asked me about my theology; they wanted to make sure I'd actually read the Book of Concord AKA how to be Lutheran in 5,000 easy steps.

But sometimes, I asked myself: Is this a test? Is my theology sound and my doctrine correct? Obviously, I made it through the process. I'm standing here today so I did something right. Maybe it's because I read the whole Book of Concord? But, in my essays and in my conversations all I wanted to tell was stories. I wanted to tell this committee stories of where I saw my theology in action. I wanted to tell them stories about who God is for me in my life.

So, I think the better question for today is how is God active in your life? Where have you encountered God? I think the answers to these questions tell us who God is.

Recently, children have told me who God is. I see God as I hide under a desk with a four-year-old, giggling because “no one” can find us. “No one” can see us, even though our feet are sticking out from the front of the desk. Right there I experience the mystery of God; I can't see God, but I know God is there.

I know who God is through interactions with the little boys who live in my apartment building. Every time they see me, they giggle and announce: “You're Liz!” This is God naming me. This is God claiming me. And like these little boys, God giggles with glee and smiles when God sees me.

I know who God is as a little one in this church runs up to me with a hug every Sunday morning and declares, “It is so good to see you, Pastor Liz!” Right there in that moment, I hear how worthy I am. God is so glad to see me!

And I know who God is as an exhausted one-year old sleeps with his head on my chest and sucks his thumb that's dyed blue from all the blue cake icing he ate that day. In this moment, I feel God's peace; I am comforted knowing that it is possible to find peace in this crazy world. These are my everyday experiences of God. These stories tell me who God is. How is God active in your life? Where have you encountered God?

Perhaps you have seen God on your morning walk as the sun rises. Or you've experienced God at camp as you gather around a fire. Maybe you've experienced God sitting in traffic, listening to music or just sitting in the silence. The possibilities are endless because that's just who God is. God pops up in surprising ways throughout our lives to tell us who God is.

I saw this question of 'who is God' pop up again several weeks ago, when Pastor Jack, Pastor John, and I sat down with groups of our confirmation students to have conversations about who God is and what they have learned in their nine months of classes. Something hit me in that room as I listened to their answers to the questions before them. These young people spoke theology: God is creator. God is savior. God is the Holy Spirit. But in that room, I started struggling again, just as I did as a candidate for ordained ministry. Because I wanted to hear stories. I wanted to hear their experiences of who God is. I realized that I wanted these young people – I want all people – to experience who God is. I want to know how God is active in your lives.

I'm going to say something radical right now. The theology doesn't always matter. Sometimes the creeds and the doctrines are just words. What really matters is how you experience God in your life. What matters are your stories that tell you who God is because isn't that why you're sitting here today? You're here because you have experienced God in your life. Because you have stories that tell you who God is.

And remember this book that we just read from the Bible is a book of stories - stories of human experiences of God. The Bible tells us that the disciples – and many other humans - had stories! The Bible tells us the disciples had experiences with God. They saw Jesus turn water into wine! They saw Jesus heal! They watched as Jesus made a little bread go a long way! They saw Jesus walk on water! Yes, those disciples had stories that told them who God is and these stories now tell us who God is.

'I Love to Tell the Story' is one of my favorite songs. It always gets me choked up; it makes me cry because it's a song that brings my 'who is God' stories to mind. These are my stories that reflect *the story* – the story of "Jesus and his love." And I love to tell that story because it is true, because it reminds me that I have lived the good news. So yes, I am qualified to answer the question 'who is God;' and so are you!

Because you, beloved children of God, you too have 'who is God' stories that reflect *the story* of Jesus and his love. You too have encountered God. You too know it is true because you have lived the good news. Thanks be to God! Amen!

Copyright © 2019, Elizabeth E. Frey. All rights reserved.



[www.trinitycamphill.org](http://www.trinitycamphill.org)