

Sermon  
May 31, 2015.  
Rev Sue Youngblood

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.. one God, yet we humans do imagine each person of the Trinity separately, and frankly we relate to each differently. First, there is God the Father. He's easy to picture. Traditionally, He is God the creator, God the lawgiver, God the judge, God the all-knowing, God the all powerful And God the Son is even easier to see. Of course, he's Jesus, the Paschal Lamb. He is God the savior, God the redeemer, God made man.

But, finally, always last it seems, is the Holy Spirit. The name just sort of drops off the end when we recite the persons of the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Just think how strange it would sound to say, 'In the name of the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father.' Perhaps it would help some if the Holy Spirit weren't so complex, so hard to visualize. In one rather failed attempt at visualization, I heard the Trinity described as 'two men and a bird'. Even the gender we choose in referring to the Holy Spirit, can be an interesting topic of discussion for those who discuss these things, as it varies according to original language of the text, Christian denomination and location in scripture. And while the wind and flames of Pentecost do speak the truth of the majestic power of the Holy Spirit, those images are limited. They just don't reflect the awesome intimacy of a holy being sent to us each of us, one on one... our comforter, advocate and guide.

So what to do.. well, I'm a simple person so I'll give you what I've got.. a simple allegory:

You are sitting at home, by yourself. You don't feel well at all. Your 15 year old nephew, Tyler, was killed last week. He was a passenger in a friend's car when they were hit head on by a drunk driver. The kids never had a chance, didn't even have time to swerve. You grieve for him and you grieve for your brother who has lost his only child. Quite frankly, you are mad at God.

Things haven't been going well at work, you've been asked to put in a lot of extra hours on a project making it so that you hardly have time to see your own kids. And on top of that- the person at the next desk, who spends most of her time chatting up the higher ups has somehow managed to take credit for your ideas. *What's the point?* You tried to make yourself feel better, and went out and bought a whole new living room set- real leather. It was cool for awhile, but now you're just kind of used to it. I mean all you're going to do is sit on it anyway.

And then there's all those people who depend on you, your family. What if something happens to this stupid job?

There's a knock at your door, but you really don't feel like answering it. It's probably nothing or worse- just something that'll add to the stress. But you get up and answer it anyway.

A young man, well, maybe not so young really- you can't tell, is standing there. He looks sturdy and confident and he has such kind eyes. He's wearing a faded red t-shirt, and jeans and sneakers that seem to have walked some distance. With one hand he braces a worn leather backpack over his shoulder.

This guy looks so familiar, but you just can't place him. He smiles and tells you

that your father sent him over to see you. Then he gives you his card. You hold it to the side so that you can read it better, the sun is in your eyes. It says, "*Holy Spirit, Advocate*". He says your Father sent him over to help in any way he can. He says that he's heard all about your grief over Tyler, your frustration and *well*, lack of direction.

Your Father sent him to help you- how like your dad. You've always been close and he knows you so well- he's been concerned about you. You are about to invite the young man in when it occurs to you that the card said 'advocate' and everything has a price, so you tentatively ask him how much this will cost. He laughs and says that of course there will be no charge to you, Jesus has paid for everything you'll need in advance. Jesus, need to remember to thank him.

Of course you ask him in and invite him to sit in the living room, but he says that he's really not all that formal. He's happy just hanging out wherever you're most comfortable. So you move right past that expensive leather couch and head for your back deck where there's a couple of old cushioned wicker chairs, a grill and a drooping umbrella.

He certainly does seem familiar, you have to have met before. You chat for awhile, and he's in no rush at all. He asks you to tell him about Tyler. You tell about how wonderful this kid was, and he isn't even shocked when you tell him about being mad at God. Then he reaches over and without saying anything gently puts his hand on your shoulder, and amazingly you feel the pain begin to ease in a way you never thought it could.

So you go on and tell him about your idiot job and how it's eating your life. And how frustrating it all is, and he looks at you, really sees you- and he accepts all your

pain as it's directly off-loaded from your heart into him. In so many ways he's like your Father, you figure that maybe that's how you know him. You want him to come by again sometime, and he assures you that he stays right near by.

Over the next few months you see him often. He's always glad to be asked over. You talk, you laugh but a lot of times you just sit. He's even happy to walk a ways with you when you take the dog out. And after awhile, an amazing thing happens, and you don't even know how it happens, but through him, you begin to realize what is important and what is not. You see more clearly what makes life full and real so it's easier now to focus on the things that really matter.

One day the two of you are just sitting out on the deck without saying much and you sink back into the cushions of your chair and smile as you notice a tiny bird bouncing on a twig on the crabapple tree. Peace.

And you start to think: You tell him how much you appreciate his help. I mean there must be something you can do in return. He reaches back and lifts the that old backpack of his from behind the chair, puts it on his lap and slowly opens it. He reaches inside and pulls out a very, very old book. It looks like it's thousands of years old. You mention this to him and he laughs and says, well actually it is thousands of years old.

Despite its age, he hands it to you easily, mentioning offhand that he actually had a lot to do with writing it. This guy *is* older than he looks. You support it carefully in your hands as you inspect the spine. It's title is Micah and he suggests you start with Chapter 6. You gently open and read. And there is the answer to what you can do in return. "He has showed you, O man what is good; and what does the Lord require of

you but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly of your God.”

You pause and place the book quietly on the table between you. Amazing isn't it, to feel such different things at the same time? Profound peace and a yet now, also, a sort of restlessness to do something. Could you actually cause good. Uncertain? Confusing? Well, a little, but not really because you are certain of one thing. It's a path, it's your path and he will walk it with you forever... every step of the way.