

May 23, 2021

I love Pentecost! Today, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit... In our gospel reading, the Holy Spirit is referred to as our Advocate as well as the Spirit of Truth. In confirmation this past year we talked a lot about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We learned that the Father creates, the Son redeems and the Holy Spirit, does what? Sanctifies...

The Holy Spirit is often characterized by the wind, the Hebrew word “Ruah” which literally means the breath of God. The Holy Spirit brings life; the Holy Spirit is all about that which is life giving! It makes us loving, kind and gracious people!

Today I'd like to do some reflecting on the Holy Spirit as our Advocate and as the Spirit of Truth. The Greek work that is translated as Advocate, could also have the meaning of defense attorney. The Holy Spirit is one hundred percent in our corner, watching over us, rooting for us, and praying for us.

Now, what does it mean that the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of Truth? Well, in our world today, there seems to be a lot of disagreement and conflict about “truth” itself. And we see people all the time trying to manipulate the media to spin whatever truth they want you to believe. Truth to one person, is a lie to another person.

And frankly, to me it's a little despairing; it feels a little out of control. But I find comfort realizing that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. That means, that

despite what we may believe, or want others to believe, God sees a bigger picture than we do, and God does know the truth, and the false stories we might tell.

And the more righteous we are about “our” truth, the more blind we might actually be. So, we always need to be humble when we talk about truth, and we always need to acknowledge that despite what we think, God does in fact know the truth.

Quick story... and this is a fictitious story, it’s not actually true, but it does speak to truth...

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there was a small farming village. And there was a drought. The crops had sprouted, but then the rain stopped. It was getting drier all the time. The leaves on the crops were curling up, the tips of the leaves were turning brown.

Everyone was concerned and worried. If they didn’t get a crop that year, some people might die of hunger.

The people in the village were restless and anxious. Some people started arguing with one another. Some people suggested that God was not happy with them; someone was to blame... And just like that, suddenly, they started looking at one another suspiciously, wondering...

One person stood up and said that the drought started when the foreigner moved into the village. A couple other people, concurred with him. Then, people began

to agree... Some people didn't like the foreigner, and some people were just plain relieved *they* weren't going to be blamed.

And then suddenly the whole village was of one mind, they all came to a unanimous decision that God was unhappy with the foreigner, and he needed to go...

So, they grabbed him and threw him off a cliff, thinking they were doing God's will. The truth as they knew it, was that the foreigner was to blame for the drought, and by killing him, God would be appeased, God would be happy again.

And wouldn't you know it, soon after that, it started to rain, and everyone was happy. This of course reinforced the truth, as they believed it.

Now, what is really the truth of the story? Was the foreigner really to blame? Did the foreigner really cause the draught? Of course, not... And imagine how God felt, when they killed someone in his name!

As our gospel reading says, "And when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment." Indeed, as our story shows...

I'm comforted by knowing there is a Spirit of Truth; God sees a bigger picture than we do. Because as mere humans, we try our best, but because we are in bondage

to sin, we are always hurting one another. And God knows the truth about how sin hurts us and how we hurt one another.

The good news today, is that one day all things will be revealed, and revealed in light of the Spirit of Truth. And in this revelation, we will all be reconciled with one another. None of us is any more righteous than any other, we have all fallen short, and yet God forgives. And because of God's forgiveness, we can forgive too...

And imagine if you will, the villagers in that community coming face to face with the man they threw off the cliff, and imagine the man coming toward them, his broken and bruised body with his arms and hands out-stretched, offering forgiveness, and saying, "peace be with you..."

This is exactly where we encounter Jesus, every single day. And it's only through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, that we can say, "My Lord, and my God." Amen...