

Fifth Sunday of Easter—Year C (Youth Sunday)
St. Mark's Episcopal Church | Milwaukee, WI
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The 7th couplet of Psalm 121 reads, "The Lord shall preserve you from all evil: it is He who shall keep you safe." But... If this is true, why is there still pain and suffering and death in the world?

Furthermore, how can God even exist?

If the theory of evolution is backed by scientific evidence than how can Genesis be true?

If we, as humans, are terrified of death, then is it not possible that we created the idea of heaven only as a means of lessening this fear?

Doubt.

It's so easy to perceive God as simply a figment of our imagination, something created by our ancestors to explain the unexplainable. There is cold, hard evidence to back science and logic but only a book written hundreds of years ago to "prove God."

I've always felt guilty for having these doubts. The Bible says we should have faith in God even though we can't see Him, hear Him, feel Him. Blind faith.

A few weeks ago in my history class, we were learning about WW2 totalitarian leaders. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin and those words kept coming up. Blind faith. It was the blind faith in Hitler that allowed the Holocaust to occur. It was blind faith in Joseph Stalin that started a massive famine in the Soviet Union. This is why I cannot be satisfied with blind faith in God.

At this point, you are probably wondering why I am standing before you providing reasons to doubt God and comparing him to Hitler. Well let's go back to Psalm 121.

When Father Burch sent me the email with all of the readings from today's service I could use for my sermon, I read through all of them including the psalm. My first thought when I read it was, "well, that's not true at all." I mean this psalm is preaching about how God will save us from death and suffering and pain, but clearly all those things still exist.

Death. We are all going to die. There is no way to avoid it—even with God's help. Yet it is promised that the Lord will make our souls eternal. But what if these promises don't mean that we are going to be kept alive forever on earth? Maybe God is talking about after death. About heaven.

But, what about pain and suffering? Well, there is truly no way to completely avoid it due simply to our human nature...our way of getting attached to certain things and people...our ambitions and fears. But what if God comes to us to ebb these pains in ways we don't expect.

I always saw God as this burly, powerful man seated in a gold throne up in a palace of clouds. But what if that isn't who God is at all. God said He made us in His image but what if He didn't mean physically. Maybe He meant our hearts and souls. Perhaps God is that voice in the back of your head that tells you right from wrong.

Perhaps He is the child giving his allowance to a homeless man.

Or the stranger who smiles as you pass in the street.

Or the mother who wakes up in the middle of the night to comfort her crying child.

The churchgoer who volunteers to help out in a soup kitchen.

The little girl who takes in a stray cat.

Yes. God exists in each and every one of us. And when we care for or comfort another it is God who gives us sympathy and love and patience.

So next time you walk down the street, know that God is in the pocket of everyone you pass and that when you need Him, He is never far away.

Amen.