

SERMON Oct 18th 2020

May I speak in the name of the Lord. Please be seated.

There are many stories in today's readings. I will focus on one – the conversation between Moses and God. Because it seems to speak to our current situation very well.

In this conversation, Moses is full of worry and anxiety.

He is worried that God will abandon him and the Israelites, on their difficult journey through the wilderness. He isn't sure how this journey will go, and he is frightened.

Moses is also anxious. He wants to see God; he wants God to reveal himself so that he can understand him better.

How can this conversation help us, as we stand in our own very different sort of wilderness, one that in its way is just as bewildering and uncertain?

The answer seems to come in God's responses.

He makes Moses a promise. He will not abandon him. He says:

“My presence will go with you and I will give you rest.”

Resting in God's presence. That is a wonderful promise. Resting, not falling asleep – but resting in something that is infinite and loving.

Then Moses asks to see what God's presence looks like, “Show me your glory,” he begs.

God's answer is: no, “You cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live.”

God can give his presence, but God cannot be seen, his presence is invisible.

Later in the Gospels, in Luke 17 Jesus explains:

“The kingdom of God will not come with observable signs. Nor will people say, ‘Look, here it is,’ or ‘There it is. For the kingdom of God is within you.’”

God's presence gives us rest and is within us. This is an amazing piece of information delivered in the Bible story today, and one we can definitely experience for ourselves.

It must mean that God's presence is available, at all times to everyone, if only we turn our attention to it, in the depths of our being.

And what better place than in church, a building dedicated to God, to spend a few moments resting in that presence?

We could right away start by closing our eyes, taking a breath, even through our masks, and just relaxing.

We can slow down our worried thoughts. Like Moses in the wilderness, our concerns about the future and the past. Just putting them aside.

And put our attention on the restful presence of God. The presence within.

Such a personal presence; one that knows us by our name.

Such a loving presence; it promises to be with us on our journey, it will not to abandon us.

Such a full, such a vast presence; the more we rest in it, the more we feel the abundance of life.

Dear God,

Thank you for your loving presence. Help us to more fully experience it as we go about our daily lives.

When we, like Moses, feel full of worry and anxiety, help us to slow down and rest in your presence. Knowing that You are available at all times and in all places, just waiting for us in the depths of our being.

AMEN