

Easter 6A - 2026

When Doubt Sets In

Years ago, I read something rather odd: "The reason mountain climbers are tied together is to keep the sane ones from going home." Whoever said that was playing with us a bit, for we know mountain climbers are tied together to keep from getting lost or going over a cliff. But there's another piece of truth here. When things get tough up on the mountain, when fear sets in, many a climber is tempted to say, "This is crazy! I'm going home".

The life of faith can be like that-doubts set in, despair overwhelms us, and the whole notion of believing in God seems crazy. Jesus knew his disciples would have days like that. So, he told them we're tied together like branches on the vine-or like climbers tied to the rope-tied together by the Spirit, to trust in one who is always more than we can understand, to keep us moving ahead on the journey of faith, to encourage us when believing seems absurd. "I will not leave you orphaned," said Jesus. "I am coming to you." (by Barbara K. Lundblad from *I Will Not Leave You Orphaned*)

Always Alongside Us

A student named Steve Winger from Lubbock, TX was taking a challenging class in Logic. The course and teacher were known for exacting and demanding exams. The final exam was looming, and the professor mercifully told the class that each student would be permitted to bring in a single 8 x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch sheet with as much information as they could put on that one sheet for help during the test. On exam day, each student came to class clutching their precious pieces of paper with as much information as possible. Some students had crammed lines and lines of font so tiny and so numerous onto that single sheet that you had to wonder how they could read it. But Steve walked in with a single blank sheet and a friend who was a senior student and who had an 'A' in logic. Steve bent down and placed that single, blank sheet of paper on the floor next to his desk. His expert friend stood on the paper.

The professor noticed the extra body in the room and asked what he was doing. Steve piped up, "You said we could bring in whatever we could fit on a single piece of paper for help on this test. Well, this is my help and he can fit on the paper!" He had followed the instructions to the letter and was the only student in that class to score an 'A' since he had his expert friend standing alongside him.

The Holy Spirit is like that friend, standing alongside us, supporting us, and guiding us.

God Surprises the Hopeless

When Christopher Columbus was sailing to the new world his hired sailors were threatening mutiny. The voyage was long and hard and there was no land in sight for weeks. One day Columbus saw an encouraging sign. Floating on the ocean swells was a small tree branch. The branches' leaves were green, indicating that land could not be far away. The green branch gave the sailors enthusiasm and a renewed hope. Soon after its discovery, land was sighted from the sailor in the crow's nest.

When all seems hopeless God has a way of surprising us and being present, even in the loneliest places. It is not God who is absent but we who have ceased to believe in a God who loves us more than we love ourselves.

(by Keith Wagner from *Who Said Loving Others Was Easy?*)

My mother's God:

Two college students went to hear the notorious agnostic Robert Ingersoll lecture in his heyday. As they walked down the street after the lecture, one said to the other, "Well, I guess he knocked the props out from under Christianity, didn't he?" — The other said, "No, I don't think so. Ingersoll did not explain my mother's life, and until he can explain my mother's life, I will stand by my mother's God. [James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Tyndale, 1972), p. 38].

Playing God

Mee Spousler of the Mount Hope United Methodist Church, in Aston, PA., tells how she was trying to put her three-year-old son to bed for a nap. When she was unsuccessful, she put him in her bed and laid down with him to encourage him to rest. She fell asleep, but he didn't. When she woke up, she saw him sitting on a chair at the end of the bed, and asked, "Luke, what are you doing?"

"I'm playing God," he replied. "Playing God?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "I'm watching over you while you sleep."

Children understand more than we do sometimes. God IS watching over us. Jesus gave that promise here in talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Not only will God watch over us but through the presence and reminder of the Holy Spirit, we will be reminded of what it means to "Love Jesus and keep his commands." And God will help us to create the environment of love, grace, faith and security that we need for our homes today. Our challenge is to listen to the Holy Spirit and to trust Christ.

(by Billy D. Strayhorn from *If You Love Me....*)