

The Analogy of Water and Sky

Sometimes, when I feel lonely, I come down here to the beach and sit on the sand. As I get older, it seems to happen more frequently. My children are grown. My grandchildren are getting grown. They have less need for me. I know they love me, but I think now age has won the war of “togetherness.” It makes my breath hitch when I think about it for too long.

Years ago, on Father’s Day or my birthday, I knew my family would be with me. Then time stretched, and instead of us being together, I started receiving telephone calls instead. Then we aged some more, and I would get the occasional card. Then it was a text message. Last Father’s Day my oldest daughter sent me a message of a thumbs up emoji.

That made me sigh.

So I sit here with my toes in the sand, and I watch that great expanse of water begin to recede from the beach. It can be nearly imperceptible, but eventually, more of the shoreline is visible. The water has lowered. Then, just to be impertinent, in the morning it creeps back, and that same shoreline is covered again.

And therein lies an analogy. In good times, the water is high on my shoreline. In the not so good times, it’s low. In out. In out. Playing its little game since forever, and that makes me think.

About God.

And some people might say, “Yes, that’s great! “I see how a life can have it’s highs and lows that you must navigate.”

People might say that as a concession.

However, I don't necessarily agree that's the thesis I'm trying to relay. Part of the analogy is that the tide has a purpose, and sometimes the purpose can break you, or it can heal you.

And as I look at the horizon—the separation of dark water and lighter sky—it comes to me. That sphere, the one that can look so far away, but sometimes so big you swear you could pull it down and hold it in your hand, is the magnet that creates this motion.

To me, that's what God is. Yes, he's everything, I know; but it helps me explain my life. The water doesn't ebb in and out on its own. The moon pulls it back and the moon moves it forward. In between there is a pause. And during that pause, when the water is still, it's because God made it so. He controls the tide, and without him, we would be lost in either a dreadful low or an exuberant high—without the calm that we sometimes need between the two.

And God gives us that peace.

So.

It's not the tide. It's what controls the tide, like God controlling my spirit; and tonight that light is big in the sky, and if I reach out, I can't touch it, but it touches me. And I'm thankful.

Now there is the true analogy.