

BaptistWay Bible Series for March 20: The Spiritâ€™s Continuing Jesusâ€™ ministry

March 7, 2011

We have three daughters, which makes my house exciting and emotionally charged at all times. Our youngest daughter will be 2 in July, and due to having older sisters, she is accelerated in many areas of her development.

Unfortunately, this acceleration has pushed her to prematurely enter into the dreaded time of life so affectionately called the terrible two's. She is becoming very independent and knows what she wants.

The problem is that even after three children, I do not always understand random finger pointing and incoherent noises, which is her preferred method of communication. If this method fails, she resorts to screaming and making noises that would make a wounded animal proud. We try to be good parents and have begun to discipline our child so that at age 16 our daughter does not throw herself into the floor kicking and screaming when she does not get her way.

When we get to the point of correcting our youngest little angel/heathen, I have found our oldest child, who is 8, immediately will come to the aid of the little angel. She will remind us our little angel is very young and does not know any better.

I must admit she has come up with some very clever excuses for our youngest daughter's behavior. While her actions do not stop us from dealing with our youngest daughter's misbehavior, the love she shows for

her little sister is precious. She has become her advocate. She speaks for her and stands up for her even in times of trouble.

The *Encarta Dictionary* defines advocate as, “somebody who acts or intercedes on behalf of another.” I think all of us have a desire for someone to be our advocate, and I know that we all need an advocate. The problem is that in this world, we seem to be so focused on ourselves that we seldom take the time to be an advocate for others.

In these passages, Jesus is continuing to tell the disciples the hard truth of the future while at the same time giving them hope and encouragement. Jesus promises the Father will give us an advocate in this world. An advocate who will help us, strengthen us, and speak the truth to us. An advocate who will never leave us, no matter how difficult life may get.

Jesus tells the disciples that life will not be easy for them and that they will come under attack, but the Advocate will never abandon them. I am comforted knowing God has sent us an advocate who will never fail us because our advocate is God himself through the Holy Spirit. Human advocates may fall short of our expectations or needs, but with God as our advocate, we will never lack for his support.

Not only does the Advocate sent by the Father intercede for us and support us, but also testifies about the one who overcame the darkness of sin and death, who is Jesus Christ.

In John 15:27, Jesus tells the disciples they must also testify just as the Advocate testifies about Jesus. I believe this applies to us as well. The Father does not send us an advocate just for our own personal security, but also to help and encourage us to become advocates to this world.

Jesus says the Father will send us an advocate so that we will not be as orphans, abandoned and alone. A man named James Lual Atak grew up in southern Sudan and spent his childhood fighting for his life in ways we

cannot even imagine. Fighting for food was minor compared to avoiding capture, enslavement and death at the hands of the northern aggressors.

When James was in his early teens he was forced to fight as a soldier for the southern Sudanese government and became part of the group known as the “Lost Boys of Sudan.” Finally, James ended up in Kenya and was given the opportunity of a lifetime: a visa to come to the United States and start a new life. James had been waiting for that day, but when the day arrived something stirred inside of James that changed his life.

Listening to the stirring within him from the Advocate, James turned down the new life in America and went back to his hometown in Sudan and started New Life Ministry. He now ministers to more than 500 orphans who have been ripped from their families because of the overwhelming violence all around them. James returned to the place that took everything from him.

James is now giving back by being an advocate to those orphans. He is standing up for them when the world has turned its back on them. He gives these orphans a voice in the midst of the violence and evil.

James is being an advocate because he has experienced and listened to the Advocate Jesus told us would be sent. The Advocate does not only comfort us and strengthen us in times of need, but empowers us to impact the world for Christ.

If you believe Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, you can be assured you have an advocate. The Holy Spirit will be with you, even if sometimes you may not realize his presence.

The question for us is not whether we have an advocate, but are we being an advocate? Are we encouraging those who need to find courage? Are we being a voice of comfort and peace to those who are in the midst of the storms of life? Are we speaking for those who the world refuses to

acknowledge? Are we helping those who so desperately need to see there is someone who cares for them?

You can be an advocate in this world and make a difference. Open your eyes to those around you and be their advocate, and share the light of Jesus that overcomes the darkness of this world.