

This week Buck O'Neil spoke to the graduating seniors of Cameron High School. Buck was a first baseman with the Negro League Baseball teams in the years before Major League Baseball was integrated. He's 93 now and still a lively and inspiring speaker. I had the honor of picking him up in Kansas City and driving him to First Baptist Church in Cameron for the event. One of the other pastors asked if I drove up in my convertible. I said, "Yes, but I kept the top up because it was windy and I didn't want Buck to blow out of my car. I'd be willing to fill in for him, but I'd have a hard time convincing the graduates that I used to play for a Negro League Baseball team." He said, "You'd have a hard time convincing them you played for any baseball team."

It's important to know who you are and what you can do. In today's first reading, that is what God and Moses talk about. Moses has gone up Mount Sinai; God has come down in a cloud. God tells Moses who God is, and Moses tells God who the people are.

Earlier, Moses had asked God's name at the burning bush. God responded with the word Yahweh, which means, "I am who I am." It is a name filled with mystery. God is so far beyond everything that you can't compare God to anything. You can only say, "God is God," or as God said, "I am who I am."

So in today's story, God tells Moses a little more. He calls himself, "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." This was news. There was more to God than a distant mystery, more than just "I am who I am." God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity. Moses learned who God was and what God could do.

He then told God who the people were and what they could do. It couldn't have been easy. I'm sure Moses wanted to say, "What a coincidence! We the people are merciful, gracious, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." But he didn't because they weren't. Moses spoke the truth. He said, "This is a stiff-necked people. Pardon our wickedness and our sins." Their necks were too stiff to bow down in worship, and too stiff to look around at the needs of their neighbors. The people didn't need a God who was sociable; they needed a God who was forgiving. Moses said, "Pardon our sins and receive us as your own."

On this Trinity Sunday, we hear the story of how God revealed who he is and what he can do, and how Moses revealed who we are – a stiff-necked people – and what we can do – commit sin. Moses and God forged a friendship because they spoke the truth. Too often we try to build our relationships on what we are not, on an image of what we'd like to be, or what we think someone else prefers us to be. But friendship thrives on

truth. We confess our sins and God shows us mercy. That is the mysterious God we name today as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.