

Looking for the Light

a devotional from
ST. CHARLES AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Monday, April 13, 2020

by Savannah Fraser

Doubt, Love, Comfort, and Paying Attention

Read:

Psalm 118

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
- 2 Let Israel say:
“His love endures forever.”

Reflect:

We are reading *Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church* by Rachel Held Evans in the weekly PINTS Group. A few weeks ago, while we were meeting via Zoom, we read a chapter called Easter Doubt. The chapter was about doubt – how it will bother you like a rock in your shoe or show up unannounced, like an unexpected guest. It will cause you to question the too-good-to-be-trueness of it all... and sometimes, just showing up – burial spices in hand – is all it takes to witness a miracle. After we finished the chapter and I logged off Zoom, I continued to reflect on it. This reflecting led me through a maze of sorts. I began to reflect on myself, the timing of the chapter, and the current times we find ourselves in. I find myself seeking a little more peace and comfort these days. Prior to arriving in New Orleans, in 2016, I was severely unaware of these tendencies. I created my own comfort and peace like a cocoon. It provided me with temporary relief from doubt, uncertainty, and self-loathing. When something would disrupt my precious cocoon of created comfort – I’d create it again & again. Thank the Lord, I am much more self-aware these days. Even so, I still have my moments of obliviousness, or days when I’m too exhausted to be aware – and I need a break. I have been worried I will slip into old patterns. I’m realizing my worry isn’t necessarily that I will slip into old patterns; it’s a fear of loss and separation from myself, loved ones, and the world. I am in stress now. I know it and I feel it and my awareness is the difference. Having grace for myself is the difference. Loving myself is the difference. Paying attention is the difference. My choice to engage in the world is the difference. So, I guess, the most important thing I can do now is to try to be intentional and pay attention.

“To make bread or love, to dig in the earth, to feed an animal or cook for a stranger—these activities require no extensive commentary, no lucid theology. All they require is someone willing to bend, reach, chop, stir. Most of these tasks are so full of pleasure that there is no need to complicate things by calling them holy. And yet these are the same activities that change lives, sometimes all at once and sometimes more slowly, the way dripping water changes stone. In a world where faith is often construed as a way of thinking, bodily practices remind the willing that faith is a way of life.”

“To see takes time, like having a friend takes time. It is as simple as turning off the television to learn the song of a single bird. Why should anyone do such things? I cannot imagine—unless one is weary of crossing days off the calendar with no sense of what makes the last day different from the next. Unless one is weary of acting in what feels more like a television commercial than a life. The practice of paying attention offers no quick fix for such weariness, with guaranteed results printed on the side. Instead, it is one way into a different way of life, full of treasure for those who are willing to pay attention to exactly where they are.”

— Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*

Ask:

I leave you with the same questions I have asked myself during this time:

- Is showing up enough, and what does that mean for me today?
- How could I show grace to myself or someone I love?
- Do I need a break?
- What am I grateful for today?
- What do I doubt today? What do I believe today?
- What could I pay attention to today? What miracle could I witness, by simply paying attention?
- How can I put love into the world?

Pray:

[Click here to listen](#) to a Liturgy and Centering Prayer called [Garden by The Liturgists](#) – designed around the movements of lament, doubt, and joy that happened as we moved through Holy Week. The Centering Prayer is an exercise focused on God's love.

To send us your prayer requests, click on [this link](#) and our church staff and prayer group will add you to our weekly prayer list. You will have the option to specify your request as confidential.

If you would like to contribute to our daily devotionals, please email Pastor Sarah, sarah@scapc.org.

www.scapc.org

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