

“Heart Prayers: Blessing the World”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for First UMC, Grand Junction, Sunday, August 2, 2020

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ

website: www.fumcgj.org/sermons-2/

Scripture Texts:

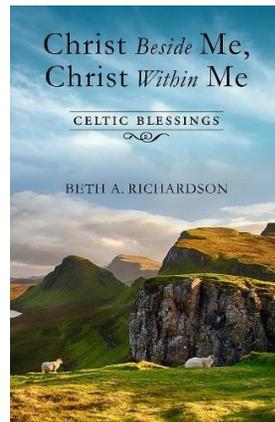
Matthew 5:1-10 [NRSV]

OPENING

♪ “Make Me a Channel (of Your Peace)”

SERMON THOUGHTS

- I. Beth Richardson and *Christ Beside Me, Christ Within Me*
→ Marked para’s in Grandpa’s story, pp. 72-73
→ The list for this segment:
“Heart Prayers, Blessing the World”
- ✓ *May You Know Love*
 - ✓ *You Walk Beside Us*
 - ✓ *Too Much*
 - ✓ *Beauty Before You*
 - ✓ *The Hurting Places*



The Hurting Places (*In line with Grandpa’s Story and “Heart Prayers, Blessing the World”*)

There is a world of hurt around me today,
And my heart fills with pain.
Sometimes I hear myself saying,
“All I can do is pray.”

And then I remember that praying
Is no small thing.
Sometimes, it is the only thing,
The one true thing for this hurting world.
Healing God, send your wholeness,
Loving Christ, your strength,
Holy Spirit, your comforting presence,
To all who hurt,
To all who struggle,
To all who mourn. Amen.

TO THE SCRIPTURES for TODAY

This finds powerful expression in the Scripture passage for today, which was read for us earlier. In His “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus casts the net wide with words of encouragement, affirmation, and hope. (*Unpack this a bit – see Scripture reading file.*)

May You Know Love

Today, may you know love.

May you know happiness.

May you know peace.

Today, may you be open.

May you be safe.

May you be blessed.

Today, may you feel uplifted.

May you feel serene.

May you feel joy.

A thousand, thousand prayers,

A thousand, thousand blessings,

On you, and you, and you.

Both poems from *Christ Beside Me, Christ Within Me: Celtic Blessings* by Beth A. Richardson. Copyright © 2016 by the author. Used with permission of Upper Room Books.

II. The Heart of Celtic Spirituality: Spiritual Practices

[Source: U.S. Catholic. <https://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201905/12-celtic-spiritual-practices-celebrate-god-our-world-31727>]

Refresher from last week (“cumulative force” of the series):

- Solitude and Silence
- Dreams

A flashback to “dreams” from last week. Several of you sent me e-mails with stories of your dreams. They really are good, but the stories are kind of long, so I’m going to spread them out over these last three sermons in the series.

I actually want to tell you two today – one that I wanted to share last week but didn’t have permission to do so at that time. I received permission this week, so this is all “above board”.

1. The wandering husband (Jan Reece)
(*Tell this “off the cuff...”*)
2. Warning! (Ruth Trowbridge)

First..., a little background. My father was a politician and was known state wide (Colorado) and I have lots of childhood experiences relating to whom he knew—we even had the governor for dinner.

My dad bought a new car about every two years and in the summer of 1955 just after I turned 16 and got my driver’s license, he purchased a 1956 Packard. He let me drive it, which I did VERY FAST! I

would Drag Race with the boys who had cars. A man in the town told him what I was doing, but his response was—“My daughter—she wouldn’t do that!” I often had many friends in the car with me and let others drive it.

There were only 13 kids (6 boys & 7 girls) in my Senior Class. And after Play Practice one night, I had all 13 in the car and the boys all took turns driving between Lamar and Holly—way too fast! God was with us, and nothing happened.

NOW, THE DREAM: I saw the headlines of the Pueblo Chieftain which read:

"Granada Senior Class All Killed in Rollover Crash." It went on to say that the car belonged to Prowers County Commissioner, A.L. McDonald, that his daughter, Ruth Anne, was a member of the class and had permission to be driving his car, but it was not known who had been behind the wheel when the accident happened.

I awakened screaming, but at that time I would not tell my parents what my nightmare had been about. Needless to say, I quit driving the way I had been, and to this day, I believe it was God’s way of telling me to SHAPE UP!”

For this week:

Learning by heart

While the Irish monks are known for their illuminated sacred texts, books were rare and valuable, so they would have had to learn many scripture passages by heart to be able to pray with them. This was a continuation of the older Druidic tradition, which was primarily an oral culture that prized memorization rather than writing.

The Irish monks sang psalms throughout each day as a central part of their prayer. They were immersed in this poetry and ancient call to see God active in the whole world. They likely would have memorized all 150 psalms, as their days were intertwined with their imagery.

Scripture meditation

I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

—Jeremiah 31:33

In daily life

Begin by finding just two lines of a scriptural text or poem that are meaningful to you. (*This can't be overemphasized! Go slowly! Tell Dave Smith's story of his PhD and "Scripture as recitation".*)

Spend time each morning with these lines, repeating them gently to yourself until you have learned them by heart and then recall them throughout the day.

CONCLUSION

Transition to "A Celtic Communion" 🎵