

**BROADWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH • COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**  
**THE WORSHIP OF GOD • JUNE 23, 2019**  
**ANNUAL COMBINED WORSHIP**

**Litany**

Based on Psalm 92

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praise to your name, Most High.

**We declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.**

The music and the melody have made me glad; I sing for joy.

**We declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.**

In your love, we will remain lush and fresh, proclaiming that God is our Rock,  
righteous in all ways.

**We declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.**

**The Scripture**

2 Corinthians 4:7-12,16-18

*But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

*So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.*

**The Message**

***What You've Got Can't Be Bought***

***Nick Larson***

Good morning, Church!

You must excuse me if I seem a little tired this morning. This past week, I spent it with a group of rising 8<sup>th</sup>-graders at Church Camp. Late nights, early morning, dodging raindrops, and teaching kids about God's universal love for them "exactly as they are" is so rewarding and also exhausting.

I love co-directing our regional camp about God and Sex, because every time I do it, it becomes one of those rare places in our culture and lives where you can be a part of one of those special communities. Especially as I get older, I find it harder and harder to find places where it truly feels like I belong.

Yet each year, at this camp we form together a place where young people learn how to make smart decisions, be safer, recognize various forms of abuse, and learn what to do when you see or are a part of it. We learn respect for our genders and their bodies, and ultimately leaving understanding that God does not make junk, and that we are all beautifully and wonderfully made in God's image.

On Monday, when I met a brand new 8<sup>th</sup>-grade camper, after getting her all settled in to the registration process and chatting up her family a bit, I sat down across from her and I asked, "What brought you to camp this week?" After she smirked and said, "A car," then she looked right at me, like almost into my soul, and said, "Do you ever just feel lost?"

Ah...I know, right. Take a deep breath. Sit with that for a second. When she said that, it just struck me. I can't remember exactly what I said to her in response, but I know what I wish I would have said.

I probably said something reassuring about how at camp we can all be friends and make a community where everyone can be found. That's honestly not a bad answer to say to a nervous camper, embarking on the beginning of a new week of self-discovery and community building.

Yet...I wish I had just paused, and looked her straight in the eyes and said, "I know; right...I feel lost on a regular basis."

I can't begin to tell you how it feels to stand up here before all of you and say that. What it means to share in a way that causes everything else to just fall away.

That's what that rising 8<sup>th</sup>-grader did for me, in the midst of that busy moment of logistics, new community forming, excitement and nerves buzzing through the room. There she was, this young woman, perched on the edge of something new, asking me, one of those pastor types and the co-director of that camp, "What do you do when you feel lost?"

I'm sure she was just asking me, an experienced camp person; what do I do to have a good week at camp? I'm sure she was looking for tips, tricks, pointers, some wisdom. But I realize now what was happening in that moment is that she obviously asked the question because some days she feels lost. Probably, right there in that very moment. I wish I had heard her well enough to just meet her right there with my own experiences of feeling lost.

Let's start right there. Are you with me on this? Instead of leaping to all the things we can do, let's just pause and step back a bit and acknowledge that there is something about feeling lost that is a universal human experience.

It's totally normal to feel lost some days. There are situations that make you feel lost; relationships, specific persons that you just don't know what to do with them. Or you have an event coming up that you are going to have to be in that situation, or just trying to find north, south, east or west, trying to make some sort of map, because you have no idea what they are going to do or what's going to happen next.

Sometimes, it is an existentially lost...I use that intentionally here, cause it's like, you know, we are on a giant ball of rock hurtling through space at 67,000 miles an hour all while spinning super-fast.

Or the geopolitical situation of the world,  
what happened to our tribe?  
what happened to that tribe?  
what happened to this country?  
what happened to the constitution?  
what happened to the president?

Like, what happened to our country that this is where the office of the president has gotten too, right? Sometimes it all just seems like fake news...

What does anything mean anymore?

Sometimes the feeling just takes up residence, like a malaise, like how do we even make our way forward when education, healthcare, infrastructure are failing us...let alone the widening gap between rich and poor.

Or like traffic. Goodness, I hate traffic.

From the big, to the trivial, to the in between.

Sometimes it feels maybe I wasted my opportunity. Like maybe I missed my chance, right, maybe there was a door open to me before, that I should have stepped through that would have taken there, but now I'm here.

Like the path that I took; was there some other path? Sometimes you need to simply vocalize those thoughts, like a bee buzzing around in your skull. Just to let it out. There can be this disorienting sense of how I (let alone we) put one foot in front of the other?

How are we doing so far? I'm sure this feels like a real pick me up sermon right now, huh? Yet, I do want you to notice the word "feel" here. This is a feeling, this is an experience. This is something that can feel immersive, and yet in some ways using that word feel, is one of the ways you can gain a sense of what's happening.

The Apostle Paul says it this way, *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed."*

Passages of Scripture like this that recall that feeling of being lost for me, open me up in a way that is both new and tender, and vulnerable, and also exhilarating. It's exhilarating because as a pastor; it often feels like there is an expectation to be the one whose literal job it is to be found. Like you're the one everyone else cheers on to lead us forward. You're the one helping people getting un-lost.

Yet, sometimes, I do feel lost. I want us all to pause for a moment, so that we don't move into a space where it feels like I'm the one up here, and you're the one out there with the questions, and then I'll be the one to give you the answers.

Sometimes we all just need to admit that we feel lost. I think this is what Paul might be hinting at when he says that we carry around the death of Christ in our bodies. That very admission can be liberating, can be freeing, can help us see beyond the decision.

Camp can be a little like that, and I'm sure this young woman had no idea what she was going to find when she walked through the front door of a camp where we were going to talk about the Bible and sex.

This church year might have felt a little like that; the loss of a senior pastor, the loss of more beloved ones in our community, young and old alike, the loss of mobility or freedom, the loss of family or jobs.

Terry and I have certainly felt it - the loss of a friend and colleague, the challenges that come from trying to turn a ship slowly enough so that everyone doesn't just fall off. We have seen this lost-ness.

It has been our great privilege to walk through those moments with you. Sixtieth anniversaries, weddings, funerals, baptisms, young and old, sickness and health,

comings and goings, celebrations and failures. And through it all to try to remind you the second part of Paul's statement, that just as we carry the death of Jesus around in our bodies, so to do we carry around his life, that it will be revealed in our mortal bodies.

Communities, like church camp and this church, are special. They reveal to us the grace of God through which God is showing us that through Jesus Christ his life will be revealed through us.

Paul reminds us to not loose heart, that though we may not have everything, our very existence, our very selves contain multitudes. Though outwardly we may feel lost, we are inwardly being renewed day by day.

That's what Annie is singing about in our Broadway song this morning, the crux or pivot, the tough moment of the musical, Annie Get Your Gun. In this song where she is singing about, "While there are lots that she doesn't have, she still has the sun in the morning and the moon at night."

What we've got, Broadway, can't be bought.

She saying she can see the light that passes through the cracks, the sunshine that makes a lovely day. The real value in life can't be purchased; what we have can't be bought.

She knows what the Apostle Paul is after in his letter to the church in Corinth. We need to fix our eyes on what is to come, not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. All of this ache, pain, and lost feelings are temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

As you heard my friend, and hopefully soon one of our pastors, Mark Briley says in his video to us. We are poised on the edge of something new here, Broadway. We have been through a season of transition, and yet the sun is rising. The generosity in our stewardship campaign, during a difficult season, shines bright for me. The way new staff have begun to slip into the community and assume valued roles brings glory. The way that new families stand before us on a regular basis to say an enthusiastic "Yes" to be being a part of the Broadway Family of faith.

This is indeed a moment in time. We are on the verge of a new exciting chapter as people of faith. So, on days, we may still feel lost. Yet, when we can follow the work of Paul, and admit to one another the ways that we feel crushed, afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down.

Then we can discover that we are not alone; that community exists, that solidarity comes in community, and that honesty what we need can't be bought.

Sometimes, that lost feeling is inviting you to slow down and consider what is next, what is needed, and what that still, small voice of the Holy Spirit is whispering inside of you right now.

Sometimes the feeling of lostness is a gift to help you realize what you had, or what you need. It can be a flick of the compass to get it spinning, so disorienting that you have to slow down and see. There doesn't need to be fear in lost. Everyone feels lost. It really should be terrifying if you don't feel lost, certainty all the time, that's scary.

That's why I'm so sure, that God is doing something special here among us, Broadway Christian Church. Late Thursday night after the board meeting when there was some real energy and enthusiasm built, after there were good questions raised, and challenges made, and stories told, and the board unanimously, enthusiastically, voted to call Mark Briley. After I stood in the hallway, outside the Loft, near the mailboxes with Terry and Ingrid, and we shared a moment, where I felt found.

There are been plenty of moments in which I have felt lost in the past year, and yet in that very moment, beyond words, I knew, that we are here as a community of faith, as individuals because of the way that God is holding us. The way that the grace and life and mystery of Jesus shines out of us, because I know that if any of this had to be up to me, or any one of us, that we could easily not be here.

And yet we are. I have seen the life of Jesus made visible around me. In the tears we've shared, in the joys we've celebrated, in the moments of silence. We have not lost heart; we have been renewed day by day. This moment has prepared us as a community to take the next steps together.

The Apostle Paul in our text this morning, and Annie in our song today, remind us that this treasure we possess is not ours. We do not need to own the sun and the moon, or the church. The extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

We are found, because God has found us. God claims you, and you, and you, as beloved. That's why I love teaching at this camp about God and sex so much, because honestly, I get to witness to what God does each and every time that people are told, God does not make junk, and God made you, marvelously and wonderfully!

And then I get to sit back and watch 8<sup>th</sup>-graders, and honestly we as adults, go from feeling lost, to feeling found. God comes looking for us, and builds community for us, and wants to show us what it means to belong.

So friends, hear me when I say, that if you feel lost, that's okay. Here in this place, God will reveal in and through you new life, eternal life, life that is everlasting.

Amen?

**Amen.**