

**BROADWAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH • COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**  
**THE WORSHIP OF GOD • OCTOBER 14, 2018**  
**60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION MONTH**

**The Psalm Litany**  
Based on Psalm 22

*When we feel forsaken, forgotten, and alone, as if God is far away from us,  
and we are far from God;*

***we cry, we plead, we search, but often find no rest for our souls.***

*Our ancestors trusted in you; they trusted and were delivered,  
but we find no relief, no pause, and no break.*

*Remember, people of God:*

***It was the Holy One who plucked you from the womb,  
gave you a name and a destiny,  
and poured praise into your mouth, like honey into willing hearts.***

*Let us pray:*

***May all the ends of the earth remember and be glad,  
future generations sing of your deliverance  
and say that you have done these things. Amen.***

**The Scripture**

1 Corinthians 13:8-12

*Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

**The Message**

***My! How Things Have Changed***

**Don Lanier**

***- Minister of Broadway Christian Church ~ 1971 – 1985 -***

The last time I stood in this pulpit was ten-years-ago when we were celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Broadway. Alice Jane and I moved away in 1986. We came back occasionally to visit friends in town, but ten-years ago was the first time I had been in this sanctuary.

It was a “**wow**” experience, for sure. My memory of this church had been Sunday mornings worshipping in what is now the Loft. We filled that space up twice on Sunday mornings... OK, not **every** Sunday. But it wasn't long before it was obvious a new place of worship was needed, and you built this beautiful place.

Ten-years-ago, Rick Frost was the senior minister. He was the one, who asked me to come back and help celebrate 50 years in the life of this amazing church. Fifty years! I looked around and toured the wonderful Christian Life Center and this sacred space, and I thought to myself, “My! How things have changed!”

Rick said to me before I got up to preach, “Now, you probably won't recognize many of the people here this morning. About 80 percent of them joined after you left.” I thought, “80 percent joined after I left? Maybe I should have left sooner!”

You may have heard, “You can't go back home, again.” There's a lot of truth in that. What you remember about home probably isn't there anymore. A lot has changed; it's just not the same place.

I stood here ten-years-ago and was grateful for the changes. It's like seeing your child all grown up, with a family of his or her own, and probably making a place in the world that makes you proud.

Change – you can't get away from it. Haven't you heard, “*The only thing that DOESN'T change is change itself.*”

Well, maybe there's just one thing that doesn't change much: what we learned in Sunday School, as we were growing up. I'm reading a book by a prominent theologian, Marcus Borg. A few years ago, he wrote a little paperback called, *The God We Never Knew*.

It's the story of his experience being taught about God as a child. It sounds pretty familiar to me and maybe to you. We probably all grew up getting the impression that God was like an old man, who lived in heaven. After all, every Sunday we would pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven...” God was out there, somewhere.

But as you grow up, Borg says, that idea becomes less and less plausible. But, it's hard to change that image. If that isn't God, then what IS God? Where is God?

Borg refused to be stuck with the God he only knew as a child. So, he went looking for the God he was yet to meet. And what he found has been hugely helpful to me.

He found that we all live in two worlds: the material world and the world of the Spirit. We can understand the material world just fine. We see it, touch it, and move around in it every day. But the world of the Spirit is not so obvious, which is one reason God is difficult for us to understand.

God is Spirit, but we are partly Spirit, too.

Have you ever been in love? I don't mean "puppy love," but the real thing. It is an experience that knocks your socks off. It's amazing. It changes you. You're not the same person you were before. You're overcome with feelings you've never experienced before.

That's a spiritual experience. And I'm coming to believe it's a God-experience, because we are changed by it. Borg says we discover God in the depths of personal experience.

Some things that happen to us are so powerful that we are changed by them. Great music does it sometimes for me. Whenever I hear "Claire de Lune" by Debussy, I just melt! I'm overcome with the beauty of it. I have to stop what I'm doing and let it wash over me. I feel a tremendous sense of peace.

I believe we meet God in moments like that. God is present and at work all around us. We just don't notice.

If you want to know where God is, go to where you think God may be at work and see what happens to you. A mission trip is like that. Anyone who has ever been on a mission trip will tell you it's a wonderful spiritual experience. It changed them.

Reaching out in kindness is another spiritual experience. You think you're bringing a cake or a pie to that friend recuperating from surgery, but that's not the important thing that's happening. What you may not realize is you are having a spiritual experience of love reaching out and touching another person. Those experiences are important, because you and I are not just material creatures with physical appetites.

We can love and hope. We can weep when we suffer. We can stand in the Rocky Mountains awed by how majestic and beautiful the mountains are.

Feelings, emotions – those are spirit experiences. They may involve some quiet time. Every now and then, we need to leave the world behind and listen to what God may have to say to us. You probably won't actually hear a voice, although some people say they have.

The point is to turn off the noise of the physical world and listen for that still, small voice that is waiting for you to listen. Some people call that “meditation” or maybe “prayer.” The important part is to listen. Then, when it’s over ask yourself, “What do you think God wanted to say to me?”

What I want to do this morning is to help you become aware of your spirit dimension, because I believe that’s where you’ll meet God.

Do you remember that story in Matthew where Jesus had been teaching a huge crowd of people? Then, he and his disciples got in a boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee just to get some rest. But the crowd saw where they were going. They ran to the other side and were waiting for them when they arrived. Do you remember Jesus looked at them, and they seemed like sheep without a shepherd? Compassion welled-up inside of him, and even though he was worn out, he kept on teaching and finally fed 5,000 of them, they say.

Compassion is a godly experience that lets you look on someone else and feel the emotion that person is going through. Compassion means to feel moved in your heart by their situation. Like last summer when all those parents and children from Central America were heartlessly separated from each other. They were sent to different states. They lost track of each other. Children cried for their mothers. Mothers and dads were frantic wondering where their children were. And hundreds of them still are!

Then, there are so many people who are trying to recover from the hurricane this past week. Their homes are destroyed; everything they own is gone! Doesn’t your heart ache for them?

That’s compassion. It isn’t a physical thing. It’s a spiritual experience. It’s being moved so deeply that you try to reach out in love, because you feel their pain.

I’ve heard it said, “One measure of your Christian faith is how deep your compassion is.”

I learned about compassion one day in Lexington, KY. It was my second year in seminary. Alice Jane and I had been married the year before. We both were in school, and I was working part-time at a radio station. Then, out of the blue, I was fired at the station. It seems that in my youthful idealism, I spoke truth to power. I told the boss – quite honestly - something he didn’t want to hear.

Being fired was quite a tragedy for us, because Alice Jane was pregnant with our first baby. Finances were very tight to begin with, but it was even worse to lose my pay check. We cut back and did the best we could, but we knew we couldn’t keep giving our church pledge. So, with a very heavy heart, I called the church office, explained the

situation, and said as soon as I got another job we would pick up our pledge again. The secretary assured me that would be fine.

Then, not long after that, our minister dropped by the seminary and asked if we could talk. He listened sympathetically to our situation; then reached out his hand with a \$20 bill. My pride welled-up and I said, "Oh, I can't accept that!"

He said simply, "Can you use it?"

In all honesty, I said, "Yes, we can."

"Well, then," he said, "use it as long as you need it. When you can, give it back to me and I'll share it with someone else."

I had heard about compassion, but I had never received it before. It took a little while for me to find another job, but when I did, I gave him back his \$20 bill. I'm sure he found someone else who could "use" it for awhile.

My prayer for all of us this morning is that beginning now we set a goal for the next 12 months. For the next year, we try our best to be open to spiritual experiences. It will be quiet moments when we turn off the physical world and open ourselves to God's presence... times when we listen for what God wants to say to us.

If we do, I believe we'll find what Marcus Borg found. We'll find the God we never knew. And then we'll look around here and say to each other, "My! Look how we've all changed! And isn't it wonderful?!"