

Sabbath Moments
A Service of Healing and Wholeness
Sunday, February 1, 2009, 6 p.m.
Southport Presbyterian Church
The Toney Chapel

That which is Hidden...

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”
(Parables of Jesus, from Matthew 13:44-45)

And I saw that he wants us not to fear to know those things he shows us, for that is why he shows them, so that we may know them. And in this knowledge he wants us to love, like, and find joy in him, without any end. As a measure of his great love for us, he shows us all that is honest and to our purpose for the moment; and even the things that he chooses to keep from us now, he shows them hid so that we may learn and understand that we shall see it clearly in his endless bliss.

So must we be glad in him for all that he shows and all that he hides; and if we do so obediently and meekly, we shall find great peace of heart and because of it we will earn his endless thanks.
(Julian of Norwich, from *Revelations of Divine Love*)

My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.
(Colossians 2:2-4)

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
(Colossians 1:25-27)

Almighty and eternal God,
You are hidden from my sight:
You are beyond the understanding of my mind:
Your thoughts are not as my thoughts:
Your ways are past finding out.
Yet You have breathed Your Spirit into my life:

Yet You have formed my mind to seek You:
Yet You have inclined my heart to love You:
Yet You have made me restless for the rest that is in You:
Yet You have planted within me a hunger and thirst that make me dissatisfied
with all the joys of earth.
O You who alone know what lies before me this day, grant that in every hour of it
I may stay close to You. Let me be in the world, yet not of it. Let me use this world
without abusing it. Let me today embark on no undertaking that is not in line with Your
will for my life, nor shrink from any sacrifice which Your will may demand. Suggest,
direct, control every movement of my mind; for my Lord Christ's sake. Amen.
(John Baillie, from *A Diary of Private Prayer*)

Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again."

The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.
(Luke 18:31-34)

There is no spiritual life without persistent struggle and interior conflict. This conflict is all the more difficult to wage because it is hidden, mysterious, and sometimes almost impossible to understand. Every serious Christian is willing to make a few initial sacrifices. It is not hard to make a good start. But it is hard to continue, to carry on the work begun, and to persevere in it through many years until the end. The effort of faith is too great, the tax on our weak love is too enormous: or at least we fear that it will become so. We do not understand the meaning of the cross and the seriousness of our vocation to die with Christ in order to rise with him to a new life. It is perfectly true that we die with him in baptism and rise from the dead: but this is only the beginning of a series of deaths and resurrections. We are not "converted" only once in our life but many times, and this endless series of large and small "conversions," inner revolutions, leads finally to our transformation in Christ. But while we may have the generosity to undergo one or two such upheavals, we cannot face the necessity of further and greater rendings of our inner self, without which we cannot finally become free.
(*Life and Holiness*)

God be with you as you enter a new week.