

## Food for the Journey

From the Bible: Matthew 6: 5-13

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August 26, 2018

This simple story caught my attention.  
Her husband was near the end of his life and receiving care from hospice.  
Being Roman Catholic, she had asked their parish priest to come by each day so they could celebrate the Eucharist and receive the sacrament together. After the bread and wine were blessed and shared, she would lean in close to her husband and whisper, "*Food for the journey.*"

Besides being touching, this story caused me to pause for another reason.  
It has been a long time since I thought about and reflected on my life in terms of *journey* which, after all, is an important and powerful Biblical metaphor.  
Abraham and Sarah leaving their home and journeying to the land God had promised them.  
The Israelites journey through the wilderness.  
Joseph, Mary and Jesus journey to Egypt and then back.  
Jesus' journey towards Jerusalem.

I have spent a considerable amount time thinking about my life in terms of getting older.  
And, being a grandparent and not just a parent.  
And, in terms of my health and energy level and my no longer being able to do what had come naturally and easily for so long.  
And, as you can imagine, I have been thinking about my life in terms of our upcoming retirement and what that will mean both in terms of stepping away from a position and role which has defined my life for so long and towards that which comes next.  
All that, but not *journey*.

So, in the couple of weeks or so since I stumbled across that story, here is what I have been thinking about. If *journey* is an meaningful metaphor for our lives...for my life...  
Where am I going?  
Where do I want to be going?  
Where am I called to be going?  
Not in terms of place, but in terms of who I am as a person and who I am as a Christian.  
Am I just who I am?  
After all these years now just set in place? Carved in stone?  
Or, is there still room for growth? For depth? For understanding?

I am good at tasks.  
At setting goals for work.  
Thinking of new programs to try and identifying new needs that await our response.  
But I am not so good at setting goals or benchmarks for who I would like to be as a person.  
More kind.  
More compassionate.  
More patient.  
More understanding.  
To listen better before I respond.  
More of an awareness of God...of the Holy...in each and all of the moments of life as it is.  
I found myself thinking about that quip, "*If you don't know where you are going any road will do.*"  
Like me, are you more likely to be on *any road* rather than on a road which matters?

This past week Bruce Reisdorf, of Clark's Funeral Home in Katonah, called and asked if I would do a funeral for a woman who had passed away. Last March she had celebrated her 100th birthday. The family, Bruce said, was not particularly religious, but they wanted a Protestant minister present to say a few words. As I thought about what *few words* I would say in a situation and setting like that, I found myself turning to these words from Psalm 90.

*The days of our lives are 70 years.  
Or perhaps 80 if we are strong.  
They are soon gone and we fly away.  
So teach us to number our days, O God, that we might gain a heart of wisdom.*  
Is that where I should be going?  
The journey I/we should be on?  
Being mindful of the days which I have?  
Gaining a heart of wisdom?

Like most of my sermons, this morning I probably suggest more questions than provide you with answers. Offer you more ponderings than certainties. Trusting that if you and I ask our questions honestly and well we will find our ways to answers which work for us. That we will discern something of what God is trying to say to us.

So as the story with which I began got me thinking about journey, it also got me thinking about that *food for the journey*.

What is it that sustains me?  
What is it that keeps my faith alive?  
What is it that deepens my gratitude?  
What is it which increases my awareness of the other?  
My awareness of the Holy?

I look back better than I see ahead and so in looking back, here is what I know to be true for me.  
My faith is sustained by serving others and making a difference.

Not by committee meetings or To Do lists.

My faith is sustained by pounding nails or mixing cement.

Working side by side with others doing what I can to make a difference.  
And, my faith is sustained by being outdoors.  
By walking in the woods.  
By listening to waves crash on the beach.  
By looking up at the stars.  
When I am inside too long or sitting too long I lose my way.  
My faith is sustained by writing.  
Sermons. Prayers. My blog.  
Each helps me to put words around what I am thinking and feeling and trying to understand.  
Maybe that which has sustained me in the past and helped me to get this far will be that which sustains me for the tomorrows which are yet to be.

I know my way is not your way.  
While our destination may be the same, the food you need to get to where God is calling you to be will be different.  
For you it may be music.  
Or daily devotions.  
Or some type of more formal study.  
Or keeping a journal.  
Or prayers and prayer partners  
Or making sure these doors are open so any who need it can walk in.  
What is important, I think, is that you are mindful of the journey and aware of what sustains you.  
That you pay attention to what you need as that daily bread that moves in the direction of the Kingdom of God. Towards who and where God calls you to be.

She leaned close and whispered in his ear.  
*Food for the journey.*